



## Ex-Ukrainian prime minister in U.S. custody

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The Ukraine's former Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko was in U.S. custody Sunday following his arrest by immigration authorities at New York's John F. Kennedy airport, U.S. officials said. Lazarenko was detained Saturday on suspicion of illegally entering the United States. He was lacking proper travel documents including a visa, Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS) spokesman Russ Bergeron told AFP. The former deputy and prime minister is wanted in the Ukraine on charges of embezzling public funds and illegally opening bank accounts outside the country.

Volume 24 Number 7077

AMMAN MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1999, DHUL QADAH 6, 1419

Price: Jordan 200 Fils

## U.S. governor defends personal handgun request

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Minnesota Governor and former pro-wrestler Jesse Ventura on Sunday defended his request for a permit to carry a handgun. Ventura, 47, brushed off criticism from the head of his Midwestern state's police association that the request, which was granted, sends the wrong signal. "I just had a death threat a week ago," Ventura said on NBC television. "There are times when I do not have my protection with me," Ventura, a former commando with the Navy Seals, pointed out that as Minnesota governor he is the state's top law enforcement officer, head of the Minnesota national guard, and head of the state troopers.

## Hungry camel herd attacks picnickers

RAS AL KHAJMAH (AFP) — A gang of eight hungry camels charged a picnic being enjoyed by two Jordanian families in this northern area of the United Arab Emirates, a newspaper reported Sunday. The camels appeared from behind a hill and descended on the food "making loud, angry noises," Gulf News said. "It took only seconds for them to be among us," we fled with the children from the picnic site," one of the mothers said, quoted by the newspaper. One of the children was slightly injured in the attack. Attempts to drive away the camels with sticks and stones failed.

## Anti-nuclear protesters invade NATO base

KLEINE BROGEL (AFP) — More than 100 anti-nuclear protesters forced their way into a NATO base here Sunday, police said. An unspecified number of militants were arrested, police added. Organisers put the figure of those detained at 80. Organisers — representing Mother Earth and War Resisters International — said that two demonstrators were attacked by military guard dogs. The action was intended to protest against the presence of 10 nuclear bombs at the base, located near the border with the Netherlands. The organisers said.

## Finnish woman shoots three dead at shooting range

HELSINKI (AFP) — An unidentified woman shot dead three men and seriously wounded a fourth at a shooting club in central Helsinki on Sunday, police said. They said the three dead were shot in the head, and the woman fled the building immediately after the incident, which took place at 4:00 p.m. local time. A restaurant neighbouring the shooting range was closed and streets in the neighbourhood were blocked off to traffic, as police searched the area. Police forces across southern Finland were mobilised to find the woman, Finnish Television said.

## 3 children killed in Russian school fire

MOSCOW (AP) — A fire swept through a boarding school in Siberia on Sunday, killing at least three children, emergency officials said. The early morning blaze destroyed the second floor of the five-story building at School No. 66 in Novokuznetsk, where children's bedrooms were located, said a spokesman for the emergency ministry. Three children under 15 years old were killed and four were hospitalised. The other 92 children in the building were evacuated to a summer camp facility, the spokesman said.

# Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation

جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة تصدر عن المؤسسة للصحافة الأردنية. الراي



## King expresses appreciation for Prince Hassan's efforts

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Abdullah on Sunday sent a reply to a message from HRH Prince Hassan expressing deep appreciation for his "distinguished and fruitful efforts and services."

In reply to Prince Hassan's message to the King on Feb. 9, King Abdullah requested that the Prince continue to head the Higher Council of Science and Technology (HCST) and to dedicate his efforts to promoting the country's efforts in the fields of science and technology.

The HCST is the umbrella body for a number of organisations that include the Royal Scientific Society, the National Information Centre, the Royal Geographic Society, and the Centre for Human Resources Development.

Informed sources said yesterday that the government will submit to Parliament an amendment to the HCST law, which currently places the council under the chairmanship of the Crown Prince.

*Following is the text of the King's message:*

"I am sending you Hashemite Arab greetings reflecting affection and pride in your remarkable and abundant knowledge and your sound and wise views and extensive experience. I highly value your services over the past years that the late King Hussein, may God bless his soul, entrusted to you in recognition of your qualifications and potential and in response to your desire and enthusiasm to serve by his side. You served the

late King as a brother, companion and supporter worthy of confidence and appreciation.

I have received, with the respect and gratitude that we have all been taught in Al Hussein's school, your kind letter expressing your noble feelings and sincere affection and your noble qualities, congratulating us on assuming the top responsibility for dear Jordan and HRH Prince Hamzah upon assuming the position of Crown Prince. In your letter, you have declared before God, the nation and people that you will be for us and the Crown Prince, a brother and supporter who will not spare any knowledge, love or support. This is what we have been accustomed to and what the Jordanian people have been used to in their relation with the Hashemite family who God has brought together and who have reflected amity, solidarity, purity and clear conscience.

While expressing my deepest gratitude and appreciation to my dear uncle for every word contained in your kind letter, I am reaffirming our appreciation of your distinguished services and sincere and fruitful efforts which you exerted side-by-side with King Hussein and with support and direction from him throughout the past years in the construction of numerous national institutions, upmost among them the HCST, the Arab Thought Forum, Al al Bayt Foundation, and Al al Bayt University. These institutions were instrumental in expanding the scopes of science and technology in our society

and our life. Your sincere and tireless efforts through the Arab Thought Forum played a key role in bringing together Arab scholars and intellectuals, uniting their efforts in discussing our nation's main issues and crystallising its future visions.

Your efforts through Al al Bayt Foundation and Al al Bayt University were fruitful — thank God — as they have both contributed to a great extent in crystallising the bright and correct image of Islam, of moderate and civilised Islam, conveying to the world a vision of an Islam free of fanaticism, bigotry or intolerance. You have enriched this experiment through your sponsorship of interfaith dialogue, allowing scholars to meet in an atmosphere of openness and tolerance and enhancing common grounds and the main axes around which the followers of the three monotheistic religions gather.

Now that these institutions have been established and borne fruit, I am entrusting you with the task of continued chairmanship of the HCST in order to dedicate your efforts towards promoting and activating the council's plans and programmes and increasing its achievements with what God has bestowed on you of knowledge and wisdom and with all the extensive experience and potential you have acquired over the years and ability to work for the future and to meet this age's requirements of science and technology in order to benefit from it in various fields of life. I am hopeful that we will

meet continuously in order to examine your plans and programmes and to exchange views and consultations about their implementation and to attain their objectives.

While expressing to my dear uncle my deepest pride and appreciation of your services which will continue with God's help, I am reaffirming that these institutions in which you worked alongside with King Hussein will remain beacons of science, thought and knowledge. I am confident that you will not spare your advice, knowledge and sound opinion for these institutions. You will remain as you have always been, my dear uncle to whom I harbour affection, respect and appreciation as I consider you as a thinker, a scholar and man of sound vision whose knowledge is sought and views are taken. I implore God the Almighty to protect you and to bestow on you health and happiness and to guide our steps towards what is good for our country and nation."

Prince Hassan had earlier sent King Abdullah a letter in which he congratulated him and Crown Prince Hamzah on the assumption of their constitutional duties, wishing them success in serving Jordan and the Arab Nation.

In the letter, Prince Hassan pledged to be a brother and supporter of the King and the Crown Prince, committing himself to providing the knowledge and support that he offered to his late brother King Hussein.



His Majesty King Abdullah offers condolences to a member of the family of an officer killed in the line of duty last week (Petra photo)

## King offers condolences to families of slain officers

TAFILEH (Petra) — His Majesty King Abdullah on Sunday visited the southern town of Tafleeh, where he called on the Faraheed and Khawaldeh clans to offer his condolences over the deaths of two police officers killed in the line of duty last Wednesday.

Sergeants Mohammad Daifallah Khawaldeh and Mahmoud Saleh Faraheed were killed by two prisoners who overpowered them in a van that was transferring the prisoners from the State Security Court in Amman to Swaga prison, 100 kilometres south of Amman, after a court session.

The prisoners, Mohammad Jaghameen and Abdullah Suleiman, were on trial for the murder of 12 people in separate incidents in the Shmeisani and Rabia neighbourhoods of Amman.

Suleiman was killed in an ensuing shoot-out with police, while Jaghameen was wounded before being recaptured.

King Abdullah met Faraheed's wife, children and relatives and was informed about their needs and status. The King ordered that their needs be met.

Expressing appreciation to King Abdullah, the members of the two clans

Tafleeh said the King's visit helped console them in their time of grief.

The two clans and the citizens of the Tafleeh governorate pledged allegiance to King Abdullah and the Hashemite leadership. Their stand was expressed by the uncle of officer Khawaldeh and other citizens of Tafleeh.

King Abdullah was accompanied on the visit by their Royal Highnesses Prince Ra'd Ben Zeld, the chief chamberlain, Prince Faisal, Prince Hashem, Prince Talal Ben Mohammad and Public Security Department Director Nasoub Muhieddin.

## Arafat says Palestinians will elect his successor

### Norwegian FM asks Arafat not to declare state in May

GAZA CITY (Agencies) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat said Sunday that he would leave the choice of who should succeed him to the Palestinians.

Arafat, reportedly suffering from serious health problems, has long refused to appoint a vice president for the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). "I am sure that any one who will succeed me will be elected by the Palestinian people," Arafat said during a news conference with Norway's Foreign Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik.

Many assumed that Mahmoud Abbas, Arafat's deputy in the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), would succeed him.

But the diaspora-created PLO is gradually being superseded by the PNA, and a new leader will likely need to win — as Arafat has done — a plebiscite.

Bondevik urged Arafat to pursue the troubled peace negotiations with Israel and not carry out a threat to unilaterally declare an independent state on May 4.

Bondevik, whose nation hosted secret talks between Israelis and Palestinians which led to the Oslo peace accords in 1993, said the two sides must continue negotiating even after the five-year interim period set out in those agreements expires next May.

"I made it very clear that the parties should go back to the negotiations and that there is a need for more time after the date of May 4," Bondevik said during the press conference with Arafat.

He also hinted that the statehood issue could have a negative impact for Palestinians in Israeli general elections scheduled for May 17.

"We don't know who will be leading the government in Israel after the elections on May 17," he said.

Bondevik, on the first visit to the Gaza Strip by a Norwegian premier, said he and Arafat spoke in depth about the stalemate in the peace process since Israel froze implementation of the Wye River accord in December.

Bondevik said he spoke with Arafat about the need to fight terrorism and cooperate in security matters with the Israelis as well as to make further progress in improving the human rights situation in areas governed by the PNA.

But he reaffirmed Norway's strong backing for the Palestinians, including significant humanitarian aid.

"I have promised the president that we will continue our support," he said.

Bondevik, who had been due to visit the region in September but postponed the trip due to exhaustion, flew into Israel late Saturday and drove to Gaza City by car for talks with Arafat and a tour of a refugee camp near here.

He was then scheduled to visit the West Bank town of Bethlehem for talks with Palestinian officials on the Bethlehem 2000 tourism and infrastructure project to prepare for the flood of tourists expected for the millennium.

Bondevik's government is a major donor to Bethlehem 2000.

Monday, the Norwegian leader will hold talks in Israel with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Ezer Weizman.

Later, Arafat flew to Germany for talks with Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder about the stalled peace process with Israel, officials said.

## Five international firms submit bids to set up country's second mobile phone network

By Ghadeer Taber

AMMAN — Five international telecommunications firms have submitted bids to supply and set up the second mobile phone network in Jordan, industry sources said Sunday.

Besides providing the equipment and building infrastructure, the bidders submitted Saturday and opened Sunday, provide for technical assistance to the operator — the state-owned Jordan Telecommunications Corporation (JTC), whose monopoly on the sector will end by Dec. 31, 2002.

JTC officials said they hoped to operate the new service, with nationwide coverage, by August.

Nortel of Canada, Nokia of Finland, Ericsson of Sweden, Alcatel of France and Siemens of Germany submitted bids for the multi-million dollar contract.

The companies will have to qualify technically before proceeding to the final stage — the financial evaluation.

The Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC) has not yet issued the telecommunications company a Global Systems for Mobile (GSM) licence.

But TRC Director General Yousef Abu Jamous was quoted by the Arabic daily Al Arab Al Yawm on Saturday as saying that a licence would be issued soon.

He did not provide details of the conditions, and senior JTC officials were not immediately available for comment.

However, a senior government official said the TRC has given the JTC a draft licence.

"The JTC is still studying the terms of the licence and is expected to finalise an agreement by the end of this month," he told the Jordan Times.

The JTC has issued the tender, but it remains unclear if the new GSM service will operate as part of the JTC or as a separate entity. Earlier, officials said that they expected the JTC to form a subsidiary to run the mobile service.

Jordan Mobile Telephone

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## Iraq claims Western warplane hit in southern no-fly zone

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq said its forces fired a missile and hit a Western warplane which was patrolling the southern no-fly zone on Sunday.

The United States and Britain denied the report.

A military communiqué quoted by the Iraqi News Agency (INA) said: "In another aborted attempt, one of many aggressions to try to harm Iraq, the murderous crows returned and violated our national airspace today."

"Iraqi air defences intercepted these hostile formations, and there are indications that one of the planes in the formation was hit by a missile from our resistance units on the ground," it said.

It did not say whether the aircraft was shot down but added that the planes fled Iraqi airspace.

INA said that the planes flew 24 sorties from Kuwait and 18 sorties from Saudi Arabian bases using planes including F-14s, F-15s, and F-18s supported by AWAC early warning aircraft.

U.S. and British planes are patrolling the no-fly zones set up in the south to protect Shiite Muslims and the north to protect Kurds after the 1991 Gulf War.

The U.S. Defence Department and the defence ministry in London said all of their aircraft had returned safely.

"The report is false. All of the morning flights [over the southern zone] were uneventful," said Pentagon spokesman Mike Byers.

The patrols have intensi-

fied in the last few months since Iraq said it did not recognise the exclusion area and following a U.S.-British missile attack on Baghdad in December.

Iraq reported three times last week that Western planes flew sorties in the northern no-fly zone and twice said they violated its airspace in the south.

INA said Sunday's flights took place at 9:45 a.m. local time with sorties over Basra, Misan, Dhi Qar and Muthanna provinces.

Iraq has threatened to attack the bases in its two southern Gulf neighbours for letting the U.S. and British planes use them. It has also asked Turkey to stop letting warplanes launch sorties from its base, an appeal Turkey last week rejected.

## Four top generals retired

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Abdullah, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, on Sunday retired four top army major generals, including Tahsin Shuroum, the second in command for nearly a decade, official sources said.

In the first reshuffle of army ranks, Ghazi Tayyeb, assistant to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for operations, was transferred to the Royal Court. The sources said he was named assistant to HRH Prince Ghazi Ben Mohammad, the King's advisor for tribal affairs.

They said the five men, all assistants to Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Mira'i Kaabneh, were officially notified of the decision on Sunday. An official announcement is expected soon after the names of their successors are finally decided, they added.

General Shuroum, who had been in charge of ground operations for nearly a decade, was also a senior member of

the Jordanian team that negotiated and signed the 1994 peace treaty with Israel.

The other three major generals are Eid Rwaidan, chief of military intelligence; Hamzeh Al Azb, head of personnel; and Mohammad Abbadi, head of administration.

Officials expected the King to introduce other changes to different ranks of the army as part of continued efforts to modernise the forces.

The King was heavily involved in the modernisation process during his 14-year army career before taking over the Throne. He last served as Commander of the Special Operations Command, the army's elite forces.

"The King is aiming to move forward with plans to modernise the Armed Forces that were laid by the late King Hussein," said one of the sources.

"As a career officer and professional soldier, the King is familiar with all the army's capabilities."



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**BUILDING COLLAPSES IN LEBANON:** Lebanese civil defence workers search a collapsed building in the town of Kahhaleh Saturday. At least five people were killed and three injured when a building on the Beirut-Damascus highway collapsed on Saturday. Witnesses said the four-storey building, home to mostly Syrian workers, blocked the highway when it collapsed. Red Cross workers sent five bodies to nearby hospitals and said they expected to pull out more people from the rubble which fell on passing cars and pedestrians. The reason for the accident was not immediately known but a woman who lived nearby said she saw workers examining and repairing the support columns of the building earlier in the afternoon (Reuters photo)

## Elections focus on the battle for Tehran

According to Likud insiders quoted in the Israeli press, Finkelstein's talking points involve short, punchy attacks focused primarily on Labour and branding Netanyahu's opponents as "leftists" unsuited to govern.

TEHRAN (AFP)—The walls of Tehran are plastered with election posters as conservatives and moderates vie for the vote in Tehran.

other elections, most candidates emphasise their professional and educational backgrounds instead of relying solely on their revolutionary

## Iraqi Shiites march over cleric's death

Iraq has blamed unnamed foreign intelligence services for previous killings but neighbouring Iran has accused the mainly Sunni Muslim Baghdad government of responsibility.

20:15 .....Bahrain, Doha (RJ)  
21:00.....Abu Dhabi, Tehran (RJ)  
21:15 .....Dubai, Muscat (RJ)

21:20	Damascus (RJ)
22:45	Sanaa (RJ)
<b>Other Flights</b>	
06:00	Istanbul (TK)
07:25	Paris (AF)
09:05	London (BA)
10:30	Cairo (MS)
11:05	Istanbul (SD)
14:10	Bahrain (GF)
15:30	Vienna (OS)
15:35	Doha (QR)
16:30	Dubai (EK)
18:50	

08:50	.....	Khartoum (SD)
20:00	.....	Beirut (ME)
23:10	.....	Tel Aviv (LY)
02:25	.....	Amsterdam (KL)
02:45	.....	Athens (OA)
<b>Royal Wings (RW)</b>		
08:30	.....	Aqaba (from Marka Airport)
<b>RW</b>		
3:20	.....	Geneva (from Marka Airport)

00:30	..Agaba (from QAIA) (RW)
01:00	..Tel Aviv (from QAIA)
01:18:50	.....Khartoum (SD)
02:00	.....Beirut (ME)
03:10	.....Tel Aviv (LY)
02:25	.....Amsterdam (KL)
02:45	.....Athens (OA)
Royal Wings (RW)	
08:30	Agaba (from Marka Airport)
09:30	Gaza (from Marka Airport)
10:30	..Agaba (from QAIA) (RW)

1:00 Tel Aviv (from QAIA) (RW)

Fig. 2

By Susan Resheq

MAN — Another, home nearly two million people, among the region's cleanest cities, thanks to an army of sanitation workers manning the streets, picking up litter from cars, pedestrians and sidewalks.

This difficult task has been complicated by the lack of implementation of articles in Traffic Law which sets a fine of between JD10 to JD50 for littering from a vehicle.

"Most people depend on us to clean the country," said Ali Khatib, clad in the standard orange uniform as he walked liner from outside a girls' school in an affluent part of the capital.

People are proud of the country's level of cleanliness," he said of his colleagues, Khalil Abu An. "But do they ask themselves who is responsible for the country's clean streets?" asked Khatib.

There are many trash con-



for Tehran

c's death

There are many trash con-

There are many trash con-

## JMA presses for changes in law to protect rights of doctors/patients

By Suha Ma'ayeh

AMMAN — The Jordan Medical Association (JMA) is working hard to protect the rights of physicians being tried on charges of medical malpractice and patients suffering from possible health care errors, officials said on Sunday.

A committee, formed by the JMA in June, is trying to end "rash measures" taken by the prosecutor generals against such physicians, including holding them in custody for two weeks and banning them from practising throughout the trial period which often takes years.

Up to 30 doctors are charged with medical malpractice each year, and the majority of them end up cleared by courts, JMA officials said.

Likewise, many victims of health care errors often complain they have given up on the legal process and on receiving fair compensation.

JMA Chairman Basem Dajani is campaigning hard to end "rash measures" against doctors charged with committing medical mistakes.

"It takes a great effort to release these doctors on bail, and sometimes this is impossible as it depends on the whim of the prosecutor," said Dajani, 56, a U.S.-educated

internist, allergist immunologist.

The JMA's eight-member commission, formed in June, is seeking to regulate litigation in order to secure the rights of patients claiming to be victims of medical malpractice as well as ensuring that doctors accused of wrongdoing get a fair trial.

The committee, which includes senior lawyers, physicians from the army-run Royal Medical Services, the JMA, and the Health Ministry, is pressing for amendments to the medical association law and other related legislation.

"We are demanding that legal measures, such as banning doctors from practising or refusing to grant them bail once they are in custody should not be taken unless there are sufficient valid proofs against physicians," said Mo'men Hadidi, 45, the committee's rapporteur.

"Until now, there is no clear mechanism on how to deal with medical malpractice, although there are several laws that regulate the practice of medicine in the Kingdom," explained Hadidi. He was referring to the Penal Code, the Jordan Medical Council temporary law, the JMA law and the Jordanian medical constitution law.

Medical malpractice such as the performance of illegal

abortions, the illicit prescribing of regulated drugs, carelessness and practising under the influence of alcohol are offences that require immediate punitive measures, Hadidi said.

"But unfortunately, the prosecutor generals tend to take rash measures against doctors when patients file any complaint, regardless of how serious it is," he added.

"The JMA approached the Health Ministry, the Justice Ministry and the attorney general to proceed in a more civilised fashion in such cases," said Dajani. "But so far, our efforts have failed."

The Ministry of Health orders that doctors charged with malpractice cease practising until the court issues its ruling on their case.

Dajani said the committee underscored the need to have separate courts dealing with medical malpractice when the late King Hussein visited the professional associations early last year.

Dajani said the JMA general assembly approved several articles to amend the medical association law in line with recommendations put by the committee.

"Now these articles and other amendments to the association law" will have to go through constitutional channels before they take effect.

## Brotherhood blasts call for confederation

By Francesca Ciriaci

AMMAN — The Muslim Brotherhood on Sunday blasted as "a lethal blow to the Palestinian cause" a recent call by Palestinian President Yasser Arafat for a confederation with Jordan.

"The Muslim Brotherhood believes that suggesting such a confederation indicates that the Palestinian [National] Authority has reached a deadlock and is trying to find a way out of the embarrassment of not [being able] to achieve a Palestinian state in a form satisfactory to the Palestinian people," the powerful opposition group said in a statement.

The Brotherhood accused the PNA of promoting "Zionist designs" by offering Israel an option that would relieve it from having to implement the agreements it signed and allow it to "trade the peace process for peanuts."

Arafat surprised many with an announcement on Feb. 12 that he was interested in forging a confederation with Jordan.

"We want [His Majesty

King Abdullah] to know that the Palestine National Council has agreed to a confederation with Jordan, but that is up to him," Arafat told a meeting of his Fatah movement.

Jordan moved swiftly to reiterate its full support for the establishment of a Palestinian state on Palestinian national soil.

"When this happens, all options will be open to discuss different forms of relationships," Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Khatib told the Jordan Times then.

Analysts here said Arafat's statement on a confederation with Jordan could be part of preparations for an announcement that the declaration of independence he had repeatedly threatened to issue on May 4, will be postponed.

"The Muslim Brotherhood rejects this confederation project which it considers very dangerous for Palestinians and Jordanians alike," the statement said.

"We call on decision-makers in Jordan, in the Arab and Muslim world to reject this project and to stand united against the Zionist invasion," it added.

## NCP denies reports of disintegration

By Francesca Ciriaci

AMMAN — Senior members of the National Constitutional Party (NCP) yesterday denied reports that their group was about to disintegrate, but party sources acknowledged ideological differences within the leadership and a mounting financial crisis.

Awad Khalidi, a member in the delegation to the 1992 Madrid peace conference and one of 27 NCP executive council members, dismissed local press accounts that party leaders had failed to convene in regular meetings for the past two months and that a semi-official meeting on Saturday came to blows.

"This is not true. We will read and study such reports," Khalidi, a former ambassador, said in a telephone interview on Sunday.

Born only two-and-a-half years ago from the merger of nine centrist parties, the NCP was initially considered the extension of the regime on Jordan's relatively new political party scene.

Analysts then said the combination of financial resources, flowing from business circles and affluent segments of society, as well as the political expertise and influence of its higher cadres of former officials and tribal leaders, would

make the NCP a success story. But waves of hundreds of resignations — all triggered by prominent defections, starting with the NCP's vice-president, the late Akif Fayed — have weakened the party ever since its official launch, in May 1996.

Brusque resignation letters have denounced undemocratic practices within the party, expressed frustration at the party's failure to embody more modern and liberal policies, and even exposed personal feuds.

The November 1997 general elections dealt another blow to the NCP, which could only win two seats in the 80-member Lower House.

Since the latest prominent resignation — that of Agriculture Minister Mijhem Khreisha, a few weeks ago — writers have increasingly dwelled on the precarious health of the party.

Some reports this week said the party was living its last days and its death would be announced soon.

"The problems of the NCP are tribalism and lack of clear policies," said one of the former ministers who resigned from the party.

"Many were disappointed when it became clear that it was a tribal, not a political party," he said, asking not to

be named in order not to "personalise the issue."

"But the problem is also ideological, since the party has not shown unity in the policies it intends to advocate."

In the first weeks in the life of the NCP, its leaders were divided on the issue of the one-person, one-vote system, with those of liberal and leftist background asking for amendments to the elections law, while others, from a more conservative background, supported it.

More recently, talks on an improbable alliance with the Democratic Party of the Left for electoral amendments allocating a percentage of parliamentary seats to political parties left many NCP members confused or perplexed.

Alarm bells are also ringing from inside the NCP ranks.

With annual registration fees ranging from JD5 for 3,000 file and rank members to JD60 for the higher cadres, the NCP is suffering from great financial difficulties.

"We estimated that we need at least JD150,000 a year to run the party properly," NCP spokesperson Khalid Nassar said in a recent interview with the Jordan Times.

Even though the party turns to its supporters for funding from time to time, "that is still not enough," Nassar said.

## Police question man in crime of honour

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — Police are questioning a 17-year-old male who last week choked his sister to death in Ramtha for suspected immoral behaviour, according to official sources.

The victim, Suhair M., 24, was killed at around midnight last Sunday. Her brother, a minor, turned himself in to police saying he had committed a "crime of honour," one source said.

Another source told the Jordan Times yesterday that the

brother had heard that his sister was involved in an "immoral relationship" and urged by his relatives he plotted to kill her.

Just after midnight on Feb. 16, the victim arrived at the home of her grandmother, where she had been living since the death of her father 15 years ago, to find her teenage brother waiting for her, the source said.

"When she entered the house, the two started arguing, then the 17-year-old punched his sister in the face, pinned her to the floor and strangled her with his belt," the source, who refused to

be named, said.

The source said a forensic examination of the victim reveal no evidence that the woman had engaged in sexual intercourse.

According to other sources, when the victim's family learned of the medical examination, they placed a white flag on her grave, to denote her innocence.

Under Jordanian law, minors who commit murders are placed at a juvenile centre, where they are taught a trade and continue their education.

## Discount toy shops aim to reach more children

By Munther Murjan

AMMAN — Close out toy shops are spreading in Amman in a bid to meet the needs of a large section of Jordanians with limited financial resources.

"The existing toy shops in the Kingdom are generally overpriced," said Firas Shabab, General Manager of American Close Out Toys Shop in Abdali. "Our shop is intended to give people a chance to get good quality toys for a relatively affordable price."

The toys are imported mainly from the U.S. after the end of each financial season.

The close out concept works on the basis that companies have agreements with merchants to buy surplus stock at the end of each financial season for a reduced price, explained Shabab. The only condition is that the products should be sold by the

kilo in accordance with a grade system, "although this will not be the case here in Jordan where the toys will be sold at a fixed price of JD8," Shabab added.

However, at JD8, the price still remains out of the reach of many. "I can hardly feed [my children], I wouldn't buy my children toys for JD8 a kilo," said Majada Abu Rumayleh, mother of five.

The average number of children in a Jordanian family is four and the per capita of a Jordanian is approximately JD100.

Normally, prices of toys range between 250 fils to a phenomenal JD800 said Issam Naber, General Manager of Adel Naber Toys Co. "Most of our toys are imported from Europe and the U.S. and some from Asian countries such as Taiwan," he said.

According to Naber, toys from Asia are generally cheaper than their American counterparts because of their quality, but

American toys are also more expensive because of customs. "If it wasn't for the high customs, anybody could get a good toy for JD20 instead of JD60 or 70," Naber said.

Mohammad Mbaideen from the Tax and Customs Department said that total custom imposed on toys is only 10 per cent. The only exemptions are for toys imported for mosques, churches, orphanages, and other charities. However, countered Naber, customs should distinguish between educational and other types of toys, and, be added, even if the current level of customs is aimed at encouraging locally-made products, lowering customs would help improve the quality of Jordanian toys as a result of the sharper competition. "We will gladly pay for locally-made toys and stop importing foreign products when the quality is competitive," he said.

## JEIA prepares for visit to PNA

JEIA prepares for visit to PNA

AMMAN (Petra) — A delegation from the Jordanian Exporters and Importers Association (JEIA) has started its final preparations for a six-day visit to the Palestinian National Authority in order to strengthen economic cooperation and boost the two sides' trade exchange. Association Director General Halim Abu Rahmeh said the delegation, which will leave on March 5, will include a number of Jordanian exporters and investors representing several industrial sectors here.

### Two-year aviation programme on offer soon

AMMAN (Petra) — Balqa Applied University and Holland's Maastricht Institute of Management on Sunday signed a cooperation agreement to offer a two-year aviation management masters programme at the Queen Noor Technical Faculty for Civil Aviation. The programme will accept 30 students with university degrees, and a TOEFL certificate. Students, who will attend lectures eight days every three months, will be required to submit a graduation proposal and attend a two-week course at the Dutch institute. The faculty and the institute are to set up the programme's regulations and requirements. University President Khaled Touqan and Institute President Mohammad Sameh Namki signed the agreement in the presence of a number of Jordanian and Dutch officials.

### Mamsar meets Saudi delegation for talks on delinquents

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Social Development Mohammad Kheir Mamsar and Secretary General Farouq Nagawai on Sunday met with a Saudi delegation representing the ministries of labour, social affairs and the interior and discussed with them the ministry's programmes and plans to take care of juvenile delinquents as well as means of rehabilitating them.

### Upper House discusses drought

AMMAN (Petra) — The Upper House of Parliament's agricultural committee held a meeting under the chairmanship of Marwan Hmoud with the attendance of Minister of Agriculture Mijhem Khreisha and Minister of Interior Nayef Qadi at which they discussed the drought that has affected the Kingdom recently. Hmoud said that the committee stressed the need for supporting the farmers who were affected by drought.

### Ajlouni opens medical workshop

NORTHERN SHUNEH (Petra) — Health Minister Nayef Ajlouni on Sunday opened a two-day workshop on medical education in Al Mansharia area, aiming at promoting medical care and management. Ajlouni inspected Mu'ath Hospital and was briefed on the state of medical services and facilities provided to residents.

## Lower House presses government to disclose findings in hijacking

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — Lower House deputies on Sunday pressed the government to disclose results of investigations into last Wednesday's hijacking of a prisoner van in which two policemen were killed.

Mohammad Daifallah and Mahmoud Farahed were killed when Mohammad Jaghabeen and Abdullah Suleiman, two prisoners who were being transported back to Swaga Prison, overpowered them in the police van, grabbed one of their guns and killed them.

During the Parliament session, Interior Minister Nayef Qadi told deputies that a seven-calibre gun was found at the scene of the hijacking, confirming earlier reports that a second gun, other than the one forced from the police guards in the van, was used in the incident. Seven calibre fire arms are not standard issue of the Public Security

Department.

During the shoot-out with police forces called to the scene of the hijacking, one of the two prisoners was killed and the other was injured and later hospitalised at the King Hussein Medical Centre.

The investigation committee looking into the incident is made up of senior officials from the Public Security and Intelligence Departments.

"This crime has raised several doubts about the state of domestic security... and whether we should review our security policy," Sidqi Shabab, a deputy from the southern governorate of Tafila, were the two policemen come from, said during Parliament's ordinary session.

Shabab questioned whether the security personnel involved in the transfer of the two prisoners, from the court in Amman, where they were being tried on 12 counts of murder, back to Swaga Prison, were following standard

procedures.

Deputy Abdullah Alkaleh said that the administration of the security agencies in the country is "being tested at this moment, and the repeated killings of policemen have caused concern among the population."

Alkaleh, also from Tafila, asked the ministers present in the House chamber why the police reinforcements took three hours to bring the hijacking to an end.

Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh said that officials investigating the case will determine whether there was, any, shortcomings in following procedures by the security officers.

Tarawneh urged lawmakers against jumping to conclusions, adding that "if the investigation proves that there was a shortcoming, we will show no leniency, and those responsible will be punished, regardless of who they are."

The investigation is expected to take several days.

## Six-day first aid workshop begins

AMMAN (Petra) — Delegates from 17 nations Sunday began a six-day regional workshop on first aid, focusing on training personnel in the delivery of immediate medical attention.

In a letter to the workshop participants, HRH Princess Sarvath, honorary chairperson of the Jordan National Red Crescent Society (JNRCS), said the workshop was evidence of the participating nations' determination to upgrade humanitarian services.

In the letter, read to the gathering by JNRCS President Mohammad Hadid, Princess Sarvath said the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies conduct humanitarian services throughout the world to assist vic-

tims of natural disasters and conflicts. She stressed that these organisations' efforts know no borders or boundaries.

The life-long efforts of the late King Hussein to promote and encourage noble deeds, particularly the provision of humanitarian services to those in need anywhere, Princess Sarvath said, will be remembered by the coming generations.

In his address to the participants, Hadid said Jordan has adopted a plan to deal with emergencies and disasters, noting that the JNRCS has a key role to play in this respect and is involved in training people in first aid services as well as securing accommodation, food and medicine for victims of conflicts and disasters.

He said the JNRCS, serves as a liaison between Jordan and non-governmental organisations in channeling assistance to disaster victims. The JNRCS provides training in humanitarian services including first aid to the country's schools and institutions and seeks to ensure that first aid service is available to every household.

The workshop will deal with the improvement of first aid services and the role of personnel providing this immediate medical assistance.

Participants to the workshop, organised by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, have come from the Near East and North Africa as well as France, Switzerland and Sweden.

## The men in orange: Overlooked, forgotten and abused yet vital to Amman

By Susan Resheq

AMMAN — Amman, home to nearly two million people, is among the region's cleanest capitals, thanks to an army of 3,000 sanitation workers manning most streets to pick up litter from cars, pedestrians and households.

Their difficult task has been complicated by the lack of implementation of articles in the Traffic Law which sets a fine of between JD10 to JD50 for littering from a vehicle.

"Most people depend on us to clean the country," said Ali Ahmad, clad in the standard issue orange uniform as he removed litter from outside a private girls school in an affluent part of the capital.

"People are proud of the country's level of cleanliness," added his colleague, Khalil Salem. "But do they ask themselves who is responsible for the country's clean streets?" he asked.

"There are many trash con-

tainers in every street, but often people ignore them and keep littering streets because they know there are workers who clean after them."

The Greater Amman Municipality (GAM), whose services cover 40 per cent of the country's 4.6 million population, spends around JD10 million a year to maintain the city's tidiness.

Sanitation workers' salaries account for JD6 million and the rest goes to pay the costs of garbage transport and maintenance of garbage dumps.

Mayor Nidal Hadid promised after taking over the reins of the GAM in August that he would work hard with the Traffic Department to enforce the no-littering articles that apply to motorists.

But street littering has continued unabated because of lack of popular cooperation and tough law enforcement.

"We are spearheading great efforts to keep the country clean, but we still need peo-

ple's cooperation," said Nayef Madad, head of the Sanitation Department at the GAM's capital branch.

"And articles of the law have to be enforced to prevent people from littering the streets."

Armed with 292 sanitation workers, his department maintains the cleanliness of a vast area between the GAM headquarters in the heart of downtown to the densely-populated nearby areas of Mahara, Hadadeh and Jofeh.

He also took pride in the GAM's "successful experiment" launched several years ago to gradually help replace Egyptian sanitation workers with Jordanians after giving them a minimum monthly salary of JD114 in addition to health insurance, social security benefits and a JD3 in yearly increase.

The move is part of wider efforts to combat unemployment among Jordanians — officially estimated at 16 per cent and independently at up

to 27 per cent — and to reduce hundreds of thousands of foreign labourers, many working illegally in low-paid jobs shunned by Jordanians.

"Thanks to our drive to recruit Jordanians, now around 180 of the 292 sanitation workers garbage collectors are Jordanians," said Madad. "The rest are Egyptians."

Sanitation workers operate on an eight-hour shift basis, with Egyptians working on a daily basis for a minimum of JD3.56 a day in addition to social security benefits.

Atiah Saad, a Jordanian, said he was forced to turn to garbage collecting as a job to help his 10-member family eke out a precarious existence on the JD117 he earns every month.

"If you can help me find another job, I would leave now," he told the Jordan Times. "But for now, I will go on working for hours to clean streets around schools," added

Saad, who joined the GAM in 1996.

Several sanitation workers complained that people in general looked down on them.

"Many people do not respect us because of our job and many of them talk to us in an impolite manner," lamented a 58-year-old Egyptian.

"Once I saw a man throwing a piece of paper on the street so I asked him to pick it up and place it in a container," he recalled. "But he totally ignored me and started shouting and cursing."

Sami Hasan, 25, who holds a diploma in business administration, said he took a job as a sanitation worker because he could find no office job.

But he said he was hardly making ends meet.

"I am responsible for six members of my family and I have to pay JD50 in monthly rent," he complained. "In addition, everything is getting more and more expensive."

He said he had to leave his



It's a dirty job, but...

fiancée after a two-year engagement because he could not cover the expected costs of marriage.

"I had to leave her because I could not ask her to wait for me any longer," Hasan added. "I am still hoping to get mar-

ried but I do not know when my financial condition will improve, that is if it will ever improve."











## Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation Established 1975

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The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays. Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times Advertising Department

## Yes to Kosovo referendum

THE DECISION of the major power Contact Group to extend the original Saturday noon deadline for a Kosovo peace accord until Tuesday was ostensibly made upon the optimistic assessment that significant progress has been achieved in the negotiations with the Serbs in particular in the last minutes of negotiations at Rambouillet to warrant another last-ditch effort. Yet we know that on the thorny subject of NATO deployment in Kosovo, Belgrade has not yielded an inch and is not likely to. The ethnic Albanians have made a series of concessions by accepting autonomy during the three-year interim agreement and agreeing in principle to disband their militia.

It appears inconceivable that Belgrade will make the ultimate concession by Tuesday and accept the presence of foreign troops on what it considers an integral Yugoslavian territory. Russia is solidly behind Belgrade on that issue and sees in the deployment of NATO forces a Western effort to extend NATO's military and political spheres of influence in the Balkan region.

Normally, one would have contemplated the creation of an effective U.N. peacekeeping force to be deployed for the purpose of policing the projected peace accord on Kosovo instead of a NATO force, but the experience of Bosnia is still too fresh in our minds to accept such a solution. Thousands of Bosnian Muslims lost their lives before the very eyes of U.N. peace soldiers under the command of then-U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali. No one wants a repetition of that tragic episode, and the presence of NATO forces offers the only effective deterrent to any Serbian violation of the peace agreement. That is why the Contact Group should insist on a NATO deployment in Kosovo as the only realistic option under the circumstances.

What also concerns us is the fact that the peace accord being worked out in France is for only a short three years. The Albanians would like to hold a referendum after that period so that the people of Kosovo would have an opportunity to exercise the right to self-determination at the end of the interim period. The right to self-determination is a jus cogens principle of international law that no government or a system of government can violate with impunity. This right supersedes all other rights including sovereignty rights.

The ultimate solution to the Kosovo conflict lies squarely in the respect of the right of self-determination which is well-enshrined in the U.N. Charter and in practically all legally binding international conventions on human rights. The people of Kosovo are right in insisting on holding a free and democratic referendum on the future of their country as the only effective way to give expression to the right to self-determination.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fahed Faneh commented on the solidarity, the political, and perhaps later, economic support provided by the Gulf states following His Majesty King Hussein's passing, saying the support has exceeded expectations. Firstly, Faneh said, Jordan cannot be ignored as it is a factor of stability, and forms a barrier between the Arab oil states and Israel. Jordan's strength, stability and good relations with all powers, including the U.S. and the Jewish state, are in the interest of the Gulf countries, added Faneh. These are circumstances which have been true for some years, the writer said, despite disagreements over the Kingdom's stand during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. No doubt, the new King will remove any psychological obstacles preventing the improvement of relations, said Faneh and added that in other words, the Gulf's leaders are using this historical moment to gamble on the future.

Al Ra'i's Mahmoud Rimawi said the suggestion of a confederation between Jordan and Palestine, as soon as an independent Palestinian state is in existence, has been met by several negative reactions. These varied from saying that the idea is premature, doubting its seriousness and noting such a confederation does not exist between any two countries in the world and, thus amounted to a campaign against it. Rimawi argued. The issue is debatable, and it is natural that it provokes different reactions because it is linked to the future, said the writer. However, he added, any debate must be built on clear principles; either the parties approve that Jordanian-Palestinian relations are of a special nature, or they deny it. Because there is general agreement that there are special relations now and have been in the past, they must remain in the future. Building such a distinguished relation for the future is the close to any national political approach, said Rimawi.

## How free trade affects foreign direct investment

## Economic Review



Dr. Yusuf Mansur

Jordan's trade deficit fell from 30% of GDP to 23%; no small feat by any standard, albeit indicating that free trade is and will continue to make up a sizeable chunk of the economy. At the same time, the flow of net foreign

direct investments has been singular — one year the flow is positive (inward) and the next negative (capital flight).

Furthermore, net foreign direct investments in Jordan remain dismal when compared to trade — the former is the more valiant knight we seek for Jordan's crusade.

The answer to the question is not a simple cut-and-dried response. However, it is a question that needs to be raised, pondered and addressed objectively, particularly when evaluating the different aspects of an economic integration agreement. Even if the answer proves illusive, the process of search would itself be beneficial. After all, reinventing the wheel requires some inventiveness and leads to new learning.

ALMOST EIGHT months ago, a distinguished economist and colleague (who, by the way, does not happen to be a columnist here!) asked the not-so-simple question of does free trade and economic integration increase the flow of direct foreign investments to a country (Jordan in this case)?

The immediate response would be an obvious "no," because exporters whose country enters into a free trade agreement with another country lose their incentive to establish factories in the partner country. They can ship duty free from their home base and thus avoid the hassle and bustle of investing elsewhere especially if that elsewhere is in the developing world. But according to the research of George Norman and Massimo Motta from the University of Edinburgh and

Universitat Pompeu Fabra, respectively, this is only part of the answer. There are several factors that govern the impact of economic integration on the flow of foreign direct investments.

It is true that a country which has a free trade agreement with Jordan would lose one incentive for investing here — there would be no obstacles to the flow of its goods and services. It would, however, have several incentives to invest in Jordan generated by the agreement. Trade agreements provide both countries with more detailed information on the economy of the partner country and entail additional assurances to investors of both countries, thus increasing the incentive to invest in a partner's country in a product area where a specific comparative advantage may exist. For exam-

ple, as Europeans learn more about Jordan through the Association Agreement that was signed fourteen months ago they will be more likely to invest here than in other countries. Additionally, as trade increases with the removal of barriers in both countries and synergies arise, other countries may decide to invest in one part of the integrated market to benefit from the large market economies. Furthermore, the increased flow of unhampered trade leads to greater specialization which brings to the area know-how and technology in the long-run, which are the basis for attracting foreign direct investments and advancement.

It is by no means trivial for Jordan to attempt to investigate and formulate a response to this question. Between 1994-98,

## The community of equals

By Gwynne Dyer

"WE DEMAND the extension of the community of equals to include all the great apes: Human beings, chimpanzees, gorillas and orangutans," reads the manifesto of the Great Ape Project. "The lives of members of the community of equals are to be preserved. Members of the community of equals may not be killed except in very strictly defined circumstances, for example, self-defence."

So killing a gorilla would be murder, and putting a chimpanzee in a zoo would be unlawful imprisonment? Yes, and don't laugh. Within the next few weeks, New Zealand's parliament will be voting on an animal rights bill that would give all the other great apes the kind of legal protection that humans already enjoy — and where New Zealand goes, others often follow. (It was also, you may recall, the first country in the world to give women the vote.)

The Great Ape Project was founded by scientists who have worked with our closest relatives in projects exploring their intelligence, social behaviour, and communications skills, and ultimately found it intolerable to see them denied the protection of the laws we have made to protect ourselves. It already has branches in forty countries, and its long-term goal is a United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Great Apes. And don't be surprised if it succeeds, because these people know what they're

doing. If you put animal rights in a separate category from human rights, then you have a huge mountain to climb in order to convince ordinary people that you aren't crazy. But if you just try to include the other great apes in a broadened category of 'human beings,' employing the same structures and rhetoric — 'these are our brothers' — as the Anti-Slavery League did 200 years ago, then you stand a fair chance of success.

For the apes ARE our brothers, or at least our first cousins. We have 95 to 98 per cent of our genetic material in common, and nobody who has kept abreast of the past twenty years of primate research would deny that the other great apes, like ourselves, are highly intelligent animals capable of strong emotions and great suffering.

And so, say the advocates of change, they are too much like us to treat them as 'other.' The slow but steady widening of the scope of the golden rule 'treat others as you would have them treat you' has now resumed its course. The notion of 'us' as opposed to 'the other,' which... assumed in the course of the centuries the contours of the tribe, of the nation, of the race, of the human species... has again become... ready for further expansion."

There would be little economic cost to this change, for the planet's surviving population of non-human great apes is well under a million, and apart from medical research we hardly exploit them

'We demand the extension of the community of equals to include all the great apes: Human beings, chimpanzees, gorillas and orangutans'

economically anyway. But the resistance is there anyway, because everybody whose interests might be threatened later on can see exactly where the logic of the Great Ape Project is leading.

As Britain's 'New Scientist' magazine put it, you might start by admitting the great apes to the 'community of equals,' but you would end up granting equality to rats and haddock. And it added, in a classic example of killer hyperbole: "If a chimpanzee kills another chimpanzee — or a human — in the wild, do we really want to hire a fleet of lawyers?"

Of course not, and nobody was suggesting that we should. The

broader scientific establishment isn't worried about lawyers' fees; it is concerned that the legal protection that is now being sought for the great apes might later be extended to all the other millions of animals who suffer and die in labs each year in the name of research. And as soon as the farming lobbies (and the supermarket chains) wake up to the threat, they will be piling in with similarly misleading arguments.

The Great Ape Project's backers are well aware of the depth of the waters in which they are paddling, and do their best to make their cause a separate, limited issue. "No doubt some of us, speaking individually, would want to extend the community of equals to many other species as well," admits the manifesto, "others may consider that extending the community to all the great apes is as far as we should go at present. We leave the further consideration of that question for another occasion."

Just as well, for it is a minefield with no clear boundaries. If intellectual ability is the main criterion for having rights, points out Peter Singer, author of the seminal 1975 book 'Animal Liberation' and one of the project leaders, then the rights that we deny to chimpanzees we should also logically deny to human children with severe intellectual disabilities. If emotions and an ability to suffer are the criteria, then almost any mammal is entitled to equal rights, and probably some of the other higher vertebrates too.

The essential sentimentality and species-centrism of the 'Great Ape Project' (or rather, of its intended audience) is clear enough in the fact that it does not seek to extend the same rights to species of equal intelligence and emotional capacity that look less like human beings: the dolphins and whales of the world. They are less cuddly, and so will have to wait further back in the queue. Indeed, they will even have to wait behind the baby seals, with their big, brown eyes (and very limited intellectual achievements).

But does this cool realism about the limits of the possible discredit the Great Ape Project? Not at all. The entire idea of a 'community of equals' is not a natural law but a creation of human culture, an expression of our belief that we will all be happier and safer if we mutually guarantee one another certain basic 'human rights.'

Self-interest and empathy both played a large part in the gradual but irresistible spread of this conviction about the 'human rights' of human beings. There is little self-interest and only a limited amount of empathy available to fuel the drive for granting equal rights for other species, so there is really not much chance that a haddock will ever legally be my brother. But the great apes, I suspect, will make it. Sentimentally speaking, that pleases me.

The writer is a London-based independent journalist whose articles are published in 45 countries.

## Letters to the editor

## 'A sorry sight'

OUR NEW generation is in good hands. This at least is the first thing that comes to someone's mind when they read the ad placed by Said Al Turk (A political circus, J.T. p.8 Feb. 16) regarding the impeachment hearings of President Clinton.

Mr. Turk's comments seem to condone what the president has done not only cheating on his wife and family, but also lying under oath.

It is a sorry sight when someone in the position of chairman of one of the biggest private schools in Jordan, comes out with comments like these, setting such an example for his students, assuring them that lying and cheating is okay and that a little naughtiness, as he put it, is and will be accepted. After all if the president of the greatest country in the world does it, it must be right.

I am glad that my kids are not in his school.

Marwan Nassar  
Amman

## An example of what to avoid

AS AN American (living in America) most Jordanians might expect that I would be horrified by "honour killings" which has been receiving much press in our country lately. However, I view this subject with mixed feelings as I have seen first-hand the results of a decadent liberal society that places personal freedom far above the good of the community.

I do wish that an alternative could be found to honour killings. I would also like to say that God expects proper behaviour from both men and women — not only women. A man can also dishonour his family with lack of morals regarding his sexual behaviour. We often witness this when men from the Middle East come to our country and seem to forget the laws of God.

Jordanians must be careful not to bow to the pressures of the West and lower our society's expectations that all people behave themselves in a proper manner for the good of the community.

At some point in America (I think the 1960s) we began to place personal freedom and the right to do "what feels good" above an individual's responsibility to follow God's laws, society's laws and the laws of common decency. Homosexuality, out-of-wedlock births, AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases are running rampant. Even our own president has forgotten that "right is right and wrong is wrong." I hope that this does not happen in our country. You must continue to impress upon your young ladies that proper behaviour is expected. America can be a wonderful example if you will take heed — a wonderful example of what not to do.

Deena Ababneh  
U.S.

## Letters of condolence

THE WORLD Executive Committee of the YWCA are deeply saddened by the passing of King Hussein. Please accept our deepest condolences.

King Hussein has not only been a leader of Jordan, but a world leader. His participation in Middle East peace discussions and in world affairs has touched all our lives.

Our prayers and thoughts are with the people of Jordan in these difficult times.

Anita Andersson,  
President  
Musimbi Kanyoro,  
General Secretary World YWCA  
Geneva

CRYING TEARS or even blood would not be enough to express our love toward our Gracious Al Hussein.

It is time to put aside our tears, and start to express what we have learnt from our beloved King.

We have to show the whole world that we are a dignified nation.

We have to walk toward our destiny hand-in-hand, shoulder-by-shoulder with our beloved King Abdullah. I believe — as all faithful Jordanians do — that is what would make King Hussein (May God's Mercy Be Upon Him) Happy.

Alaa Mohammad Majed Al Itan  
Politics with Development  
Sussex University/ Brighton  
England

THE DAY our beloved King Hussein passed away, a huge scar was left in the hearts of the Jordanian people, and the whole world as well. I pray to God to ease the pain of every member of the Royal family and especially on Her Majesty Queen Noor, who remained supportive by his bedside for the past seven months.

I believe deep down in my heart that God the Almighty will be watching over his son King Abdullah, and all members of the Royal family, in addition to his loyal countrymen.

In return, we will remain loyal and appreciative as always to all what King Hussein had offered and accomplished for our country. His Majesty's memory will remain embedded in our hearts and minds so long as we are alive.

Rest in peace my King, the time has come for you to watch over us from the heavens above.

Joanna B. Saket  
Amman

YOUR COUNTRY has lost a great King. The world has lost a diplomat and peacemaker. May he rest in peace.

Alice Medcof  
U.S.

SINCE I was a young girl, I had a great fascination and respect towards King Hussein and I was deeply shocked when I heard the news that he passed away. It made me cry and I feel it as a personal loss, and a loss to the whole world. One can be born a King or Queen but I don't know any King or Queen that was born with the charisma your King Hussein had.

Marieke Mulder  
Amsterdam

IT IS with great sorrow and firm solidarity that I convey my sincere sympathy and condolences on the sad passing away of your great leader, His Majesty King Hussein. I share in your grief, and I share in your resolve to move forward with confidence in the inheritance of hope that he worked so hard to build for you all.

In his death, the world loses a grand and visionary statesman, the Middle East mourns one of its wisest leaders, and Jordan grieves for a ruler and guide of exemplary brilliance and nobility.

His Majesty is an example of the heights to which a leader of a small nation can raise its influence in world affairs. With only the strength of his values and his will, he provided a lodestone for others to understand, uphold and secure. For the leaders and people of Jordan itself, his life's work stands as both an enduring example of courage and commitment and a signal of what the future demands.

His Majesty has left behind a rich legacy of achievement and of courage. He will be remembered for many kinds of greatness.

Nazia Ismail  
U.S.

WE SHARE in the mourning for King Hussein — a great and good man — who will be much missed by those around the world who looked to him as a brave and courageous peacemaker. The importance of Jordan at the heart of the Middle East must not be underestimated, and much is owed to the work which he has done over many years. We trust that this will be continued by his successor and that the strength and unity of the Jordanian people will carry you all through this difficult time.

Sheila Brain  
President, YWCA  
Great Britain

Featu

Robbe  
collectStudy  
horm

By Brigitte G

YOUR COUNTRY has lost a great King. The world has lost a diplomat and peacemaker. May he rest in peace.

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YOUR COUNTRY has lost a great King. The world has lost a diplomat and peacemaker. May he rest in peace.



## Robbed ancient cemeteries at Ghor es-Safi include collection of inscribed gravestones in Greek and Aramaic

THE LARGE-SCALE, continuing tomb robbing and pilfering of antiquities in the Southern Ghor region is one of the more disturbing aspects of Jordan's otherwise impressive antiquities sector. The problem is so vast, here and elsewhere in the country, that official authorities, non-governmental organisations, and concerned private citizens alike seem unable to do anything about it — despite occasional arrests of culprits or expressions of a determined will to stop this embarrassing scourge. Now, an intriguing new approach to the problem has been attempted in the Ghor es-Safi region by a pioneering archaeologist and some innovative officials in the Department of Antiquities. Unable to stop the robbing of vast ancient cemeteries there, Dr. Konstantinos Politis of the British Museum and colleagues from the Jordanian Department of Antiquities (DoA), including local inspector Khalil Hamdan, have spent the past two years systematically trying to achieve three simultaneous goals: a) to document what they can from the looted ancient sites, b) to collect as many objects as possible for the Department, and c) to interact with those whom they suspect of doing the robbing and collecting as much information as possible about the sites and the materials being stolen. A related problem that caused Politis and the DoA to try this approach was the continuing rapid expansion of agricultural lands and the construction of new roads and buildings, both of which have destroyed or threatened known antiquities sites.

"We discovered that a great deal could be learned from the local people who had been finding ancient remains for decades during their routine agricultural activities, and we decided to tap this source of information that had not been sufficiently explored before," Politis said in a recent interview. The results of this rather unorthodox approach have been rather exciting, and positive in many ways. The past two years have seen the identification of new antiquities sites, and new antiquities within known sites have also been documented. A unique collection of inscribed tombstones from the 4th-to-6th centuries AD has been retrieved and is now safely in the hands of the DoA.

The medieval Islamic town and surviving stone water reservoir (birkeh) at the area in Safi called 'Unayz, west of Wadi Hasa, have been further documented and studied. Using aerial photos and ground surveying, Politis' team found that the ancient settlement extended further westwards than had been previously thought. They also identified parts of an ancient road that crossed the Wadi Hasa at a nearby ford, and collected some plain ceramic tiles from a robbed out tomb (the tiles once probably formed a star-shaped arrangement).

### Massive cemeteries

On the south side of the wadi, the team studied large Early Bronze Age I and Byzantine era cemeteries that had been discovered and pilfered by tomb robbers.

These cemeteries in the Naqa' area had been partially excavated in 1995 by a joint team from the DoA and Mu'ta University. Further examination of the area, also using aerial photos, prompted Politis to estimate that "tens of thousands of burials at Naqa' represent one of the largest Early Bronze Age I cemeteries ever found in the Levant." There seems to have been some Egyptian influence on the local population, to judge by the types of grave goods found.

The Early Bronze Age I (EBI) period in Jordan/Palestine (around 3300-3000 BC) is one of the most fascinating ancient eras, for at this time human beings started the process of developing proper walled towns, or inventing 'urbanism'.

The EB towns and cemeteries of the Southern Ghor are among the most numerous and important of any in the Middle East, and retain significant information on the first urban stirrings of humankind. To lose them to unchecked theft would be to forfeit one of humankind's most valuable repositories of information on our first urban stirrings. The EB settlement at Safi has not been identified, but Politis' work suggests that it may be buried beneath alluvial deposits and agricultural fields to the west. Byzantine tombs were discovered in the Naqa' area in far smaller numbers than the EBI tombs, but they represent a diversified population that is fascinating in itself.



The birkeh at Ghor es-Safi (photo courtesy of Konstantinos Politis)

### Islamic sugar mill town

The major standing remains at Safi are the remains of a sugar mill called Tawaheen es-Sukkar in Arabic ("the sugar mills"), dating from the 12th-to-15th centuries AD. Long known but never systematically excavated or even documented, the sugar mills were examined by Politis' team and proved to be a sugar cane processing and refining plant fed by two water channels, enclosed within an external mudbrick wall. The tomb robbers accidentally uncovered well preserved underground water channels and stone-paved surfaces, which have now been documented and protected.

A fascinating aspect of the study of this site is the history of its name, which dates back to the biblical story of Lot and his daughters who survived in a cave there after God destroyed all the people of nearby Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19). According to Politis, Islamic tradition gives the name of Lot's younger daughter as 'Zughar', a name that seems to have stuck to the place. The Bible says that Lot escaped to a town in that area called 'Bela' (that is, 'Zo'ar'), perhaps in the early 2nd Millennium BC. The 14th century BC Amarna letters mention a place called 'Sulhu'. In the Classical period the town there was called 'Segor', labelled off the 6th century AD Mad-

aba mosaic map as "Balak, also Segor, now Zoora. The Jewish Talmud refers to it as "Zoar the city of palms." In medieval Islamic times it was called "Zughar," and the Crusaders knew it as "Segor." The large-scale sugar industry in this region in medieval Islamic times may have given the name of the place to the name of the product: "sukkar" in Arabic, which became "sugar" in English, "sucré" in French and so on. Perhaps at Safi town there is fascinating etymological as well as archaeological history to unravel, Politis said.

The sugar-producing Byzantine and middle Islamic town of Zughar was probably located near the sugar mills, in the adjacent area of agricultural fields to the north-west known as Khirbet Sheikh 'Isa. This is also the best candidate for the site of ancient biblical Zoar (if such a biblical town ever existed).

Bulldozers working in the area have recently exposed remains of an ancient city wall built of well-hewn ashlar blocks, Politis said, and one bulldozer exposed the remains of what may have been the entrance to a Byzantine church.

### Rescued cultural remains

The materials that have been rescued during this work at Safi include a wide range of objects spanning thousands of years, most of which have

been illegally excavated and offered for sale on local and global markets. The Early Bronze Age I period was represented by pottery, ostrich eggs, alabaster vessels, beads and mace heads, while from the Middle Bronze Age II (1800-1500 BC) came pottery, metal objects, and beads. Byzantine items included funerary stelae (stone grave markers), pottery, glass, coins, copper items, kohl sticks, amulets, plaster mirror plaques, and gold earrings and beads. The middle Islamic period produced primarily pottery.

The most important collection of ancient artefacts from these ongoing cemetery looting sprees is over 300 funerary stelae from the 4th-to-6th centuries AD, of which about 90 per cent were inscribed in Greek and the rest in an Aramaic script. Many more have been sold and sent outside the country, but the collection that has been saved is unparalleled for the information it is providing on the Byzantine era population in the Southern Ghor.

For example, most of the Greek Christian names were based on indigenous Semitic (Nabataean/Arab) names, though written in the Greek language, which was the common and dominant language of the Byzantine period in this region. Among the Christians buried at Safi were one man from Petra and another from Feinan, and a Jewish person from Galilee. Some of the deceased were bishops, deacons and other church officials, and one Jewish man buried there was the head of a synagogue, but it is not known if he lived in Safi or was visiting from elsewhere.

The tombstone inscriptions gave the name of the deceased and the precise date of death, often with the phrases "be died with a good name and good reputation," and the even more touching "be courageous, no one is immortal."

One stone gave the date of 18 May of the year 363 AD: this has at long last solved the mystery of the exact date of the famous earthquake that shattered many towns in this region in the year 363 AD. Most grave stones also give the age of the deceased. Decorative elements on the tomb stones include birds, crosses, and snakes, and traces of red, green, yellow and white paint have been found



By Rami G. Khouri

on some of them. The tomb stones did not stand upright, as is the custom today, but were said to have laid flat on the tomb, according to the reports from the tomb robbers themselves.

The few Aramaic-inscribed tombstones, unlike all the others, were dated from the fall of the Jewish second temple at Jerusalem, and thus probably represent burials of a small group of Jewish refugees, traders, or immigrants who died in the Safi region. Historical texts from the 1st and 2nd centuries AD mention Jewish refugees fleeing political upheavals in Roman-dominated Palestine, and some of them may have sought refuge in Safi, where they died and were buried, Politis said. Papyrus scrolls from the mid-2nd century AD attest to Nabataean-Jewish co-existence in the Dead Sea region, and thus it would not be unusual to find Jewish families living in Nabataean towns, or Nabataean families living in Jewish areas.

"This is one of the biggest collections of Early Byzantine tombstones from the entire Middle East, and it is also noteworthy for the textual information, dating, quality, and the demographic information it provides," Politis said.

He hopes to properly excavate what remains of this cemetery one day, and to learn more about the Early Bronze and Byzantine communities that lived and died there. He also feels that the known middle Islamic antiquities from sugar-exporting Zughar town must be urgently protected and properly studied, and made more easily accessible and presentable to visitors. A local museum has been proposed to house some of the important collections of objects coming out of the Southern Ghor and the Safi area in particular.

The work has been funded by the Department of Antiquities, the British Museum, and private donors.

## Study questions use of growth hormones in short but healthy kids

By Brigitte Greenberg  
Associated Press

GIVING GROWTH hormones to short but otherwise healthy children adds only a modest 5 centimetres to their height on average, a study found, leading some experts to question whether up to 10 years of daily injections are worth the cost and the trouble.

The 10-year study in Thursday's New England journal of medicine is the first long-term look at the controversial practice of administering growth hormones for cosmetic reasons, a use that has not been approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Dr. Raymond I. Hintz and colleagues at Stanford University showed that about 80 per cent of the children studied reached heights greater than would have been expected otherwise.

However, the results in individual children varied, and 20 per cent saw no height increase.

What's more, few of the children reached the target height set by doctors

based on the size of the child's parents.

Hintz called the results "somewhat disappointing." "The question is: do we treat, understanding that it's not a 100 per cent guarantee and that it's years of treatment, or do we let nature take its course?" he said. "This is going to be a difficult judgement. I think different parents are going to give different answers." The American academy of Paediatrics recommends use of growth hormones only in children who have a deficiency of the hormones; a rare chromosomal abnormality called Turner Syndrome that stunts growth in girls; or a chronic kidney disorder that retards growth.

The academy warns that the hormones should not be widely used for cosmetic reasons because they could lead to tumours, diabetes, hip problems or difficulties with self-esteem. This study found no side effects.

Even though the FDA has not approved the drugs for use in short but otherwise healthy children, it is not illegal to do so. Roughly 30,000 children are treated with growth hormones in the

'Sometimes people judge others... based on their stature'

United States yearly, and about 20 per cent of them don't fit into one of the categories the FDA deems as medically necessary.

One year of growth hormone therapy can cost \$10,000 to \$25,000.

The new study was paid for in part by Genentech Inc. of South San Francisco, California, which holds 67 per cent of the U.S. Market for growth hormones. Eli Lilly and Co. and Pharmacia and Upjohn also produce growth hormones.

The researchers examined 121 children who were considered short for no known medical reason and were treated with growth hormones for two to 10 years. Among 80 children who received treat-

ment and who have reached adulthood, both boys and girls were an average of about 5 centimetres taller than would have been expected otherwise.

In an accompanying editorial, Dr. Sharon E. Oberfield of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University called the findings inconclusive but was sceptical of hormone use on healthy children.

"Is short stature a disease? If not, should the most severe short stature be considered a disability warranting treatment?" Oberfield wrote.

Hintz defended the use of the hormones in some cases where a person is "severely short," meaning below 1.22 metres for a woman or 1.52 metres for a man.

"When you have trouble interacting with people or in handling kitchen cabinets or driving, then it becomes a significant problem," he said. "Like a lot of 'isms', such as racism or ageism, there is heightism, which can be subtle.

Sometimes people judge others, even unconsciously, based on their stature."

## Exercise can severely damage your health

Agence France Presse

GOOD NEWS for couch potatoes: contrary to popular wisdom, exercise may be harmful if done in excess, fitness experts warn.

Too much exercise may reduce the body's ability to fight off diseases ranging from the common cold to more serious illnesses like heart disease and cancer, experts said.

Much of the evidence is anecdotal, but a study of some 2,300 runners who participated in the 1987 Los Angeles Marathon found one out of seven got sick a week after the race, a rate nearly six times that of runners who trained but did not run the marathon.

The study also found that runners who trained more than 100 kilometres a week doubled their odds for illness compared to those who ran less than 32 kilometres a week.

"Excessive exercise can backfire on you," says Ken Cooper, the fitness guru who coined the term "aerobics."

Pointing to elite athletes who have been struck with life-threatening diseases like skater Scott Hamilton, Cooper argues that "there appears to be a point of diminishing returns where your immunity is adversely affected and you break down your resistance to infection and disease."

How much is too much "varies according to the fitness level of the individual," says Cooper, a physician who heads the Cooper Institute for Aerobic Research in Dallas, Texas. Heavy training may suppress white blood cells that form the body's "first line of defence" against illnesses, adds David Nieman, a professor of health and exercise science at Appalachian State University.

The good news is that a moderate level of exercise may in fact strengthen the body's immune system.

Studies show that people who walk for up to 45 minutes a day could reduce their risk of catching a cold or sore throat by half.

## Navy sound-deadening technology may have many civilian uses

By Bill Kaczor  
Associated Press

LOW-FREQUENCY noise such as the whump-whomp of helicopter rotor blades can be more than just annoying. Research indicates it can raise blood pressure and hasten fatigue.

U.S. Navy scientists assigned to develop ear protectors for helicopter crews found no material on the market that would adequately block the sound, so they invented a new technology.

Their patented solution shows so much promise that commercial interests are lining up to use it in appliances, automobiles, airplanes, spacecraft, ships and buildings as well as for ear cups, said Capt. Bob Hain, science and technology director at the Naval Aerospace Medical Research Laboratory.

"It's a technology as opposed to a material," said Gerry Thomas, head

of acoustics for the lab at Pensacola Naval Air Station. "So far every material that we've attempted to apply the technology to, we've been successful." That includes epoxy resins, silicon gels, polyurethane foam, plastics and silicon- and carbon-based rubbers, said Thomas, who has a PhD in acoustics from the University of Florida.

Tests show, depending on the application, the technology can improve sound absorption by 50 per cent to 1,000 per cent. A 0.6-centimetre thickness can block as much sound as a foot of concrete.

Mold-Ex Rubber of nearby Milton is licensed to use the process in certain products and over the past two years sold Ford Motor Co. more than 1 million exhaust recirculation hoses that reduce engine noise. Production, however, has discontinued because Ford made a design change that solved the problem another way, said Bruce Guy, Mold-Ex vice

president and technical director.

Later this year, he said, the company, a subsidiary of Norfolk, Virginia-based Southland Technologies Inc., will begin using the formula in rubber and plastic protectors as well as foam insulation for boat builders.

Thomas and co-inventor Bill Cushman, who worked on the project on a contract basis, relied on basic physics for their sound solution.

"We knew that laminates of different materials were better than homogeneous materials in blocking lower frequencies," Thomas said. Sound waves lose energy at the point where dissimilar materials meet, but such layering would be impractical for ear cups.

"We wondered if it would work using very small particles that were very dissimilar since progression of sound requires molecular collisions," Thomas said.

The answer was yes, but it took 41 attempts before they arrived at a correct balance of high- and low-impedance particles. "The formula is very specific," Thomas said. "If you are off by a couple parts per hundred, you lose the effect." The technology works across the frequency spectrum but is particularly prized for its low-frequency performance because nothing else has been effective in that range, Guy said.

Moulded products such as the ear protectors represent only a small fraction of potential uses so the lab now is focused on perfecting materials in sheet and spray-on forms.

"That's the big enchilada," Thomas said. "It's just been this past summer that we've had a sufficient number of breakthroughs because the science involved with large sheets is very different than the science involved with small surface areas and airborne sound." The

lab also has approached Florida State and Florida A and M universities for help in applying the technology to high-strength composites such as those used to make aircraft. A chemical company wants to try it with fibres, including kevlar, a main component in helmets, Thomas said.

Since initial research in 1993-95, Cushman's contract has expired but he is working independently to advance the concept in what he termed a friendly competition with the navy lab.

He has patented the use of discarded tires, frozen and broken into crumbs, as a low-cost raw material and a more expensive approach combining various technologies.

Cushman, who has a doctorate in sensory psychology from the University of Maryland, also has joined with Intelligent Automation Inc. of Rockville, Maryland, to develop headsets for the navy that can be

used in noisy environments. They are in the first months of a two-year contract to develop soundproof ear cups with microphones that digitally cancel background noise.

The navy lab has spent nearly \$2 million developing its technology, but if sheet materials prove successful that investment will be returned within months in manufacturing royalties, Thomas said.

The military will reap other benefits just from better hearing protectors that can be worn around jet engines, big guns and other noisy environments.

The navy spent \$37.5 million in one year — 1995 — on hearing disabilities and the department of veterans affairs paid out \$3.68 billion from 1968 through 1995, Hain said.

Noise "not only affects someone's hearing," he said. "If you can't hear what's going on, it affects your ability to accomplish your mission."







## Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

### Exemption of industrial production inputs from customs wins Cabinet's initial approval

THE COUNCIL of Ministers has given its preliminary approval to the comprehensive programme that exempts nearly 2,200 industrial production inputs from customs. The Cabinet referred to the Ministry of Finance the question of finding alternatives to compensate the treasury for the estimated JD86 million loss from the exemptions.

An informed government source said the most probable alternative to compensate the treasury is to raise the general sales tax. Such a step, if approved, would

require amending the Customs Law and presenting it to Parliament for taking a decision.

The committee which was entrusted with the issue of exempting industrial production inputs from customs has recommended to the Council of Ministers implementing the exemption over three stages ending in June.

The exemption would result in raising the competitive edge of national industries and enabling it to enter new market at competitive prices (Al Dustour).

### Study says Jordan needs 193,000 housing units within five years

"STUDIES INDICATE that Jordan needs 193,000 housing units between 1999 and the year 2003 and that most of the units are needed for limited income and low income groups," said Zuhair Khalifeh, general manager of the Jordan Mortgage Refinance Company. He noted that housing investments in the private sector concentrate on meeting the needs of the medium and high-income groups.

Khalifeh indicated that his company has extended five loans totalling JD14.6 million during 1998. The credits included refinancing 1,337 housing loans, he said adding that the company also issued and sold its first three-year bonds for a total of JD10 million. Moreover, the Jordan Mortgage Refinance Company succeeded in providing JD11 million to the military housing funds to enable them fulfil their objectives in granting housing loans.

The general manager said that banks responded favourably with the objec-

tives of the company by offering and executing special programmes that extend housing loans for up to 15 years. He added that banks also responded with the partnership programmes carried out by the General Corporation for Housing and Urban Development with investors from the private sector.

Khalifeh indicated that despite the high level of interest prevailing in the market at present, people were applying for the programmes. He said the company seeks to boost the participation of banks and financial institutions in granting housing loans and to finalise the documents related to dealings with the entities that operate according to the Islamic principles.

Furthermore, the company aims at intensifying its marketing activities in order to expand lending and refinancing as well as periodic floating of bonds and ensuring that investment institutions purchase these bonds and trade them at the stock exchange (Al Ra'i).

## HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1999

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) Send notes to all the people who owe you money today. You might be surprised to find out how much you've loaned out that's never been repaid. You've got a generous heart, and you're kind of forgetful, so you're the perfect person to borrow from. And that's one of the reasons you end up broke by pay-day.

**TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) You should start off the day in a good mood — strong, forceful, dynamic, able to keep tall buildings in a single bound. Be careful about that, though, because as the day continues, your advantage weakens. Tomorrow you could actually find yourself in complete confusion. To avoid that, make solid plans while you feel decisive.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) You're being pushed to do what you do best, and that's not a bad idea. But take care. As you're putting on your performance, think not only about what you're saying, but also about how you're being heard. If you disregard your audience's cherished belief, you might not get the reception you hoped for.

**CANCER:** (June 22 to July 22) There's paperwork or bureaucratic snafus that need to be cleaned up. Dive into that first thing, because it'll go more easily than usual. Conditions get a little more complicated as the day continues, and it's probably going to be a tiring evening. Best not to plan on going out, if you can possibly avoid it.

**LEO:** (July 23 to August 22) The move you had planned isn't going to work, because you're being blocked. If you're cautious, you may find a way around a problem. You might not be checked after all. You still have a few tricks up your sleeve, but don't play them too quickly, and certainly don't get overconfident about a recent success.

**VIRGO:** (August 23 to September 22) There's room for improvement today, and you may be the person to point out where, when, why and how. You might not be the team leader. You're more likely the brains behind the operation. Today, however, you may have to speak up, or somebody could make a dreadful mistake. If you see something going wrong, holler.

**LIBRA:** (September 23 to October 23) This day could start out with worries about money, but don't let that get you down. If you need more for something fun you have in mind, how about taking on a little more work? That's not quite as good as getting a handout, but it looks like it's more achievable. Go ahead and sign up for that overtime so you can get what you want.

**SCORPIO:** (October 24 to November 21) You have awesome powers, but hold back just a little longer. Do a bit more planning. Get your resources together. Figure out where you're going to get the money and how you'll pay it back. A big opportunity will come later this week, and if you spend the time now getting ready, you'll be prepared when the opportunity happens.

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) A day that starts out as drudgery could end up exactly the opposite. That's due to the introduction of a new sparring partner. You two can learn a lot from each other, and today is only the beginning. So if you meet somebody you find mildly irritating but rather attractive at the same time, relax. That's exactly as it should be.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 19) Capricorns are among the most generous people in the world, and they work harder than just about everyone to provide for the people they love. You should be proud to be a Capricorn, especially if you have to stop doing something you want to do and start doing something you have to do. That could happen today.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 20 to February 18) There will be lots of new possibilities popping up over the next day or two — people with creative ideas that you could follow through on, people who'd like to get to know you better or engage you in philosophical dialogue. One word of caution: Stay away from the one who's after your money.

**PISCES:** (February 19 to March 20) Take it easy today. There's no need to rush into anything. There are all sorts of wonderful opportunities, but it looks like there are some hidden problems, too. You should proceed for the next few days as if you were sailing over coral reefs. There's a beautiful harbour and a gorgeous island you can visit, if you're careful.

Birthstone of February: Amethyst — Onyx.

## A.F.M. TRADE

Sunday, 21-02-99

ACCESS 4646868

Company	Open Price	Close Price	Change
<b>BANKS</b>			
ARAB BK	220.000	219.000	-0.45%
NTL BK	1.540	1.540	0.00%
BK OF JORDAN	1.340	1.340	0.00%
INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK	1.520	1.500	-1.32%
THE HOUSING BK	2.870	2.830	-1.39%
JO. KUWAIT BK	1.690	1.680	-0.59%
JO. GULF BK	0.700	0.670	-4.29%
JO. ISLAMIC BK	1.740	1.730	-0.57%
PHILADELPHIA BK	0.540	0.540	0.00%

BANKS INDEX 286.580 POINT -0.57%

<b>INSURANCE</b>			
JO. FRENCH INS	2.690	2.680	-0.37%
JO. GULF INS	1.680	1.780	+4.76%

INSURANCE INDEX 124.230 POINT +0.36%

<b>SERVICES</b>			
ELECTRIC POWER	1.760	1.730	-1.70%
URBAN ELECTRICITY	1.700	1.750	+2.94%
JO. INTL TRADING CENT	0.270	0.260	-3.70%
AL-HART	7.250	7.000	-3.45%
AL-ZARQA FOR EDU	0.890	0.890	0.00%
ARAB INTL FOR INVS & TRADING	1.100	1.170	+6.36%

SERVICES INDEX 114.350 POINT -0.99%

<b>INDUSTRY</b>			
CEMENT	3.600	3.730	+3.61%
PHOSPHATE	2.380	2.390	+0.42%
AL-FOTASH	4.130	4.100	-0.73%
PETROLEUM REFINERY	10.760	10.780	+0.19%
JO. TANNING	5.150	5.150	0.00%
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL	3.420	3.100	-9.65%
AL-ZARQA IND	1.350	1.320	-2.22%
DAIRY	2.860	2.900	+1.40%
TOBACCO & CIGARET	1.580	1.550	-1.90%
JO. PIPES	1.120	1.120	0.00%
BAR AL HAWA	5.700	5.650	-0.88%
MIDDLE EAST COMPLEX	0.570	0.560	-1.75%
JO. STEEL	0.940	0.940	0.00%
ARAB ALUMINIUM	1.900	1.900	0.00%

INDUSTRY INDEX 96.390 POINT +0.37%

<b>PARALLEL</b>			
EXPORT BK	0.920	0.920	0.00%
JO. TRADING FACILITIES	0.380	0.390	+2.63%
CENTRAL STORG	0.380	0.350	-7.89%
UNION INVS. CORP	0.890	0.880	-1.12%
AL - EKAL	0.890	0.880	-1.12%
AL - SHARQ	1.080	1.050	-2.78%
MEDICAL APPLIANCES	0.460	0.460	0.00%
AL DAWLAH	0.620	0.610	-1.61%
ARAB INVESTORS	0.960	1.000	+4.17%
ARAB INTL TRADE CENTURY	0.190	0.190	0.00%
NAMCO	0.220	0.210	-4.55%
UNION TOBACCO	4.600	4.370	-5.00%
AL-RAZI	0.540	0.540	0.00%
NTL POULTRY	0.600	0.570	-5.00%
NUTRI DAR	0.770	0.770	0.00%

GRAND INDEX 1825 POINT -0.33%

## Study: U.S. companies lost \$12.4b in copyright piracy last year

WASHINGTON (AFP) — U.S. companies lost an estimated \$12.4 billion in copyright piracy last year, up from \$11.7 billion in 1997, an association of copyright industries has reported.

The findings were contained in a report from the International Intellectual Property Alliance (IIPA) to the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR).

The alliance urged the USTR to designate Israel as a "priority foreign country" for its inadequate copyright protection, a move that could expose the country to U.S. trade sanctions.

Israel's domestic markets for sound recordings, videogames and computer programmes, once promising and profitable, are being overwhelmed by piracy," the IIPA found.

It also recommended that Mexico, Macau, Italy, Russia, Kuwait, Turkey and Poland be placed on a "priority watch list" for closer scrutiny of their efforts to stamp out intel-

lectual property theft.

The USTR in the next few months is to announce its review of countries that could be hit with trade sanctions for failure to ensure intellectual property protection.

The Business Software Alliance (BSA), one of the components of the IIPA, argued that a critical step in combating piracy would be the "assurance of proper software management within government agencies worldwide."

"Governments who commit to legal software will send a strong signal to end users both within the government and in the private sector that unauthorised use and copying of software is not accepted practice," it said in a statement.

The BSA also urged that three other states, Ireland, Peru and the Czech Republic, be added to the list of "priority watch" countries.

Another member of the IIPA, the Interactive Digital Software Association (IDSA), reported that U.S. comput-

er and video game publishers lost some \$3.2 billion worldwide last year to piracy.

IDSA said the largest entertainment software losses occurred in China, where 95 per cent of the game market is pirated, the Russian federation, where 97 per cent of the market is pirated, Mexico, where the piracy level is 85 per cent and Hong Kong, where the piracy level is 72 per cent.

Other markets contributing to serious entertainment software piracy are Thailand, Malaysia and Paraguay, according to IDSA.

In addition to the BSA and IDSA, other members of the International Intellectual Property Alliance are the American Film Marketing Association, The Association of American Publishers, The Motion Picture Association of America, The National Music Publishers Association and The Recording Industry Association of America.

## Swiss watch exports reach record value in 1998 despite Asia crisis

GENEVA (AFP) — The value of Swiss watch exports set a record of 8.4 billion Swiss francs (\$5.9 billion, 5.25 billion euros) in 1998 despite lower volume and the Asian crisis, the industry federation has said.

The result was based on a strong performance chiefly during the first seven months of 1998, which was followed by a weaker trade environment, a statement from the Swiss Watchmakers Federation

said. Manufacturers sold 31 million watches to beleaguered Asia, a fall of 1.6 per cent from 1997.

Sales to Asia were worth 7.52 billion Swiss francs, a rise of one per cent from 1997 mainly explained by strong exports of steel watches, accounting for 2.8 billion Swiss francs of the total.

Asia's share of the Swiss watch market has fallen to

37 per cent from 44 per cent one year ago.

Business remained buoyant in the United States, Switzerland's largest watch market, with exports up 14.1 per cent to 1.3 billion Swiss francs.

Sales to the European Union also held up well, progressing almost 16 per cent to Italy, five per cent each to Germany and Britain, and 15 per cent to France.

## Saab slashes losses

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — Saab Automobile reduced net losses in 1998 to 620 million kronor (69.9 million euros, \$79 million) from 1,906 billion kronor in 1997, and made an operating profit, the company has said.

Sales in Japan surged. The U.S. group General Motors owns 50 per cent of Saab.

Operating results showed a profit of 68 million kronor from a loss of 1.23 billion kronor. Turnover rose by 27 per cent to 28.418 billion kronor from 22.39 billion kronor in 1997.

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# Pacers pass the Bucks in final seconds

MILWAUKEE (R) — Chris Mullin's 18-footer with 18 seconds left snapped a tie and the Indiana Pacers made a pair of big defensive plays to hold on for an 82-80 victory Saturday over the upstart Milwaukee Bucks.

After Mullin's wide-open jumper, the Pacers (6-3) turned to defense for their fourth win in five games. Antonio Davis blocked a lane jumper by Glenn Robinson, who had 31 points and 10 rebounds.

"It was pretty hectic at the end," said Mullin, who scored nine points. "We got our opportunity on Antonio's big block. We knew we had to defend Glenn Robinson, because he's their go-to guy."

Milwaukee had one more chance but when they inbounded to point guard Terrell Brandon, he tried to dribble through a double-team and lost the ball.

The Bucks complained bitterly that Robinson, who led Milwaukee with 31 points, was held on their last possession.

Reggie Miller scored 20 points for the Pacers, who moved into a tie for first in the Central Division with Atlanta.

Indiana entered the game one-half game behind Milwaukee (5-3).

"We got a big block and executed the pick-and-roll," Pacers guard Mark Jackson said. "The Bucks are a great basketball team with great shooters and scorers. Fortunately, we came away with the victory."

In Salt Lake City, Karl Malone scored 28 points and surpassed 28,000 for his career as the Jazz trounced the SuperSonics 110-80 four days after being embarrassed in Seattle.

In a battle of unbeaten on Tuesday, the SuperSonics shut down the Jazz, 71-56, holding Utah to the second-lowest NBA total since the advent of the shot clock. Malone led the Jazz with only 15 points.

"I think we came out with a lot more energy than what we had up there," Jazz coach Jerry Sloan said.

"We had the advantage Tuesday. They were tired," SuperSonics forward Detlef Schrempf said. "They had things going for them tonight. We didn't."

These teams have represented the Western Conference in the NBA finals the last three seasons. The Jazz improved to 8-1 atop the



Utah Jazz centre Greg Ostertag (L) goes high to block a shot by Seattle SuperSonics guard Hersey Hawkins during the first quarter of their NBA game, on Saturday in Salt Lake City (Reuters photo)

Midwest Division. The Sonics fell to 6-2 with their second straight loss but remain atop the Pacific Division.

In Miami, the Miami Heat continued to make a mockery of the condensed NBA schedule, winning for the fourth time in six days, 81-71 over the Houston Rockets.

P.J. Brown, totalling 24 points and 15 rebounds for Miami, which became the first team to win three games in as many days with a 91-80 victory at Detroit on Wednesday.

Despite the absence of injured starters Jamal Mashburn and Voshon Lenard, Miami has won five in a row in the last 10 days. "The team was stunned, and embarrassed by their 1-3 start," Miami coach Pat Riley said. "Now they're working harder."

chise record-low nine points in the third quarter.

In Cleveland, Shawn Kemp had 24 points and 11 rebounds and Derek Anderson added 19 points to lead the Cleveland Cavaliers to their fifth straight victory, 89-84 over the slumping New Jersey Nets.

The Nets, who suffered a heart-breaking overtime loss to Houston on Thursday, held a 78-74 lead with 4:07 to play before the Cavaliers took control down the stretch.

In Portland, Brian Grant scored 18 points and grabbed an NBA season-high 24 rebounds as the Trail Blazers held off the Golden State Warriors 90-84 for their fourth straight victory.

Grant is averaging 19.6 boards over his last three games for Portland, which improved to 4-0 at home.

Isaiah Rider added a season-high 27 points for Portland, which held a 55-35 rebounding advantage over the league's best team on the boards.

Jason Caffey had a season-high 20 points and 12 rebounds for the Warriors, who had a four-game winning streak stopped.

In Los Angeles, Gary Trent came off the bench to score a season-high 25 points and added a career-high 15 rebounds as the Dallas Mavericks snapped a seven-game losing streak with a 105-90 victory over the winless Los Angeles Clippers.

Michael Finley also established a season-high with 31 points for the Mavericks.

In Philadelphia, Mookie Blaylock made two clutch 3-pointers down the stretch to repel a rally as the Atlanta Hawks dealt the Philadelphia 76ers their fourth straight loss, 76-69.

Trailing by 13 points entering the fourth quarter, the 76ers surged within 68-66 before the Hawks struck back.

"I don't think we played that well," Blaylock said.

"You've got to feel that you can put a team away, not let them hang around like we did. But we stuck in there and got a win."

Atlanta's Steve Smith scored 14 points before leaving with a sprained right knee in the third period. Allen Iverson led the Sixers with 26.

## King Abdullah affirms Pan-Arab Games will proceed as planned

### Prince Ali appointed president of JSF

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Abdullah on Saturday said the 9th Pan-Arab Games will be held on time, May 1999.

King Abdullah, who was speaking during a meeting at the Royal Court with Saleh Irsheidat, head of the higher administrative committee of the 9th Pan-Arab Games, which the Kingdom is hosting, stressed the need for unified efforts in order to ensure the upcoming Games become the success His Majesty the late King Hussein wished.

Also Saturday, and upon directives from King Abdullah, Minister of Social Development and acting Minister of Culture and Youth Mohammad

Khair Mamsar appointed HRH Prince Ali president of the Jordanian Soccer Federation (JSF).

Athletes and sport officials expressed their satisfaction with the appointment, saying that Prince Ali has showed great interest in many sports, expecting he will provide momentum to all sports.

The federation's secretary general Mohammad Hamdan added: "The federation is honoured to have Prince Ali as its president in accordance with the late King Hussein's desire."

Former Minister of Culture and Youth, Saleh Irsheidat, was appointed vice-president of the federation.

## Schmitt leads German double in ski jump

BISCHOFSHOFEN, Austria (AP) — Martin Schmitt uncorked a huge second jump to clinch the gold medal and lead a 1-2 German triumph Sunday in the large-hill ski jumping event at the Nordic Ski World Championships.

Schmitt, this year's sensation on the World Cup circuit with seven victories, leaped 129.5 metres off the K120 hill in the second series to beat countryman Sven Hannawald and Japan's Hidehiko Miyahira, who took the bronze.

The final results reversed the order of the first heat, when Hannawald jumped 127 metres to lead ahead of Schmitt, who leaped 126.

Schmitt's second jump was by far the longest of the day and gave him a total of 263.4 points. Hannawald, whose second leap was also 127 metres, earned 261.7 points.

Miyahira led a valiant Japanese effort but had to settle for the bronze. His second jump of 128 metres was the second longest of the rainy day and coupled with his first leap of 125.5 gave him a total of 258.8 points.

"Everyone expected me to win and I was under a lot of pressure," said Schmitt, 21.

who has taken ski jumping by a storm in his third season. But he had already caught attention last year when he helped Germany win the silver medal in the Olympic team event in Nagano.

"I had to take risks. The double victory is an excellent result," he said.

Hannawald, who has been struggling throughout the season, said he wasn't disappointed by missing the gold. "I achieved my goal," he said. While the Japanese had the superior style on their side, the Germans had longer jumps.

Janne Ahonen of Finland, the 1997 normal hill world champion and World Cup leader, took fourth place, ahead of Kazuyoshi Funaki of Japan, the Olympic normal hill champion and Masahiko Harada, another Japanese who was the defending champion.

The most prominent victims of the first round were Olympic large-hill champion Jani Soininen of Finland, last two season's overall World Cup winner and Lasse Ottersen of Norway, a 1994 Olympics silver medalist. They all failed to make the cut of 30 qualifiers for the second round.

## Tyson faces disciplinary hearing after tossing TV

ROCKVILLE, Maryland (AFP) — Jailed former heavyweight boxing champion Mike Tyson faces a disciplinary hearing here Monday after hurling a television set into a set of metal bars, officials said.

The outburst could prompt prison officials to place tighter restrictions on Tyson, who with good behavior might be able to resume fight training in May and box through a work release programme.

No one was injured in Tyson's angry outburst, which came Friday night at the Montgomery county detention center, where he spent Saturday in isolation.

"He threw a TV," county corrections department spokesman Eric Seleznow said. "He threw it against some bars with people on the other side."

Tyson, 32, has been kept with about 12 other prisoners in a special section of the jail secluded from the main population of 640 prisoners since he received a one-year jail sentence Feb. 5.

Tyson pleaded no contest to assault charges stemming



Mike Tyson (File photo)

from an August 31 auto accident in which he punched an elderly man and kicked another after their vehicle re-ended one being driven by Tyson's wife Monica.

Attorneys for Tyson have two weeks to file an appeal of the sentence and seek a trial on the charges if they desire.

An Indiana judge is waiting to see what action, if any, Tyson takes before ruling

whether or not Tyson's actions violated his probation for a 1992 rape conviction. That probation is scheduled to expire next month.

No conviction was made against Tyson because of his no contest plea, which has no equivalent under Indiana law. But if Tyson is ruled to have violated his probation, he could face punishment up to another four years in prison.

## Athletic Bilbao topples Madrid 1-0, jeers return for Real

MADRID, Spain (AP) — Santiago Ezquerro continued Real Madrid's woes on Saturday, scoring in the 73rd minute to lift Athletic Bilbao 1-0 and renew calls for the dismissal of Real coach Guus Hiddink.

The loss at home was Madrid's second-straight and third in its last five league matches, dropping it to 11-4-8 and 37 points, in fifth place in the Spanish league but in danger of slipping a spot when Deportivo La Coruna plays its 23rd round match Sunday.

The victory improved Bilbao to seventh place with a 10-7-5 record and 37 points, six behind Primera division leader Barcelona, which was to face third-placed Celta on Sunday.

In two other games Saturday, Extremadura beat Betis 2-1 and Zaragoza won 4-2 over Racing in Santander.

But in Madrid, Real pushed forward constantly but lacked coordination and its attacks dissipated.

Bilbao nearly went ahead in the 55th minute when Ismael Urzaiz's header was spectacularly saved by Real's German keeper Bodo Illgner. But Illgner couldn't stop Ezquerro's right-footed smash 18 minutes later.

By the final whistle, the white-handkerchief waving crowd at Santiago Bernabeu stadium was on its feet. "fuera, fuera" (out, out) at the club manager Lorenzo Sanz as well as Hiddink.

Hiddink's job has looked increasingly uncertain in recent weeks, especially on a 3-0 drubbing by arch-rival Barcelona on Feb. 14. Wednesday's 6-2 victory over racing in the Copa Del Rey afforded him a momentary reprieve, but Saturday's loss only fueled his problems.

"We played well in the first half. We had bad luck," Hiddink said. "I am not a frightened man."

Elsewhere, at Almedralejo, Argentine striker Carlos Dure score with two minutes remaining, capping a flurry which saw all three goals in the final 12 minutes and giving Extremadura the victory.

Extremadura took the lead in the 78th minute on a penalty converted by Jose Toril,



Real Madrid's Raul Gonzalez, left, goes for a high ball against an unidentified Athletic Bilbao player during a league soccer match in Real's Santiago Bernabeu stadium on Saturday in Madrid. Real lost the match 0-1 (AP photo)

but Jose Galvez equalised for Betis within five minutes.

At Santander, four different players scored for Zaragoza and it cruised to its victory over racing.

Roberto Acuna of Paraguay put Zaragoza ahead in the 20th minutes and Pablo Jose Diaz scored the eventual game winner nine minutes later to put his side ahead 2-1.

Bosnian Sabo Milosovic made in 3-1 in the 69th and Marcos Vales added the finale just before the final whistle.

The remaining 23rd-round matches were set for Sunday with Mallorca at Oviedo, Atletico Madrid at Real Sociedad, Alaves hosts Tenerife, Salamanca welcomes Villarreal and Valencia plays at home to Valladolid, as does Espanyol against Deportivo La Coruna.

## Only three top teams survive French Cup

PARIS (R) — The French Cup lived up to its reputation of unpredictability on Saturday as only three teams from the first division were left in the third round of the competition after Saturday's matches.

Lens, Metz and Nantes, all out of contention for the league title, made amends by saving their scalps in a second round which saw Olympique Marseille, Paris St Germain,

Rennes, Sochaux, Le Havre and Strasbourg all crash out.

It was the worst ever showing by first division teams in the history of the cup.

There will be more teams from the fourth and fifth divisions in the next round than top flight teams, with amateurs St Georges Les Ancizes the unlikely heroes of the week-end thanks to their 1-0 victory over Sochaux on Friday.

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## 80,000 Sydney residents get first look at new Olympic stadium

SYDNEY, Australia (AP) — About 80,000 Sydney residents turned out on sunny Sunday to get their first walk around the athletics track the stadium that will house the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2000 Olympics.

New South Wales state Olympics minister Michael Knight said the huge turnout for the great stadium walk showed the public still supported the Sydney games despite the international Olympic bribery scandal.

It was the public's first opportunity to see inside the 110,000-seat stadium Australia at Homebush Bay, which will open with a rugby league double-header

on March 6. "I think this really shows that Sydneysiders and Australian people in general are interested in the Olympics and not in the International Olympic Committee and all the nonsense to do with Salt Lake City," Knight told Australian Broadcasting Corp. radio.

The first person in line for the historic walk was 67-year-old Struan Lampert, who declared it "wonderful."

"I've been looking forward to absorbing some of the atmosphere that the athletes will experience," Lampert said.

"I've been to Homebush Bay before and I think it's fantastic."



## Turkey warns Europe to stay out of Ocalan trial

### Kurds stage protests in Iran

Agencies

**TURKISH PRIME** Minister Bülent Ecevit warned Europeans Sunday to mind their own business as Ankara prepares for the trial of Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan.

"We will expect the politicians and governments of foreign countries and the representatives of any international body to refrain from attempts to put pressure on our courts," Ecevit told reporters in Ankara.

"Particularly those governments who have prevented their own judiciary from performing their functions as a concession to PKK [Kurdish Labour Party] terrorism are not entitled to give lessons in justice to any country," he added.

A European Union (EU) spokesman earlier said that EU foreign ministers plan to take up the issue at a meeting on Monday, and the Council of Europe has announced a forthcoming visit to Turkey to demand guarantees for a fair trial of Ocalan.

"We would consider such attempts as an unacceptable affront to Turkish justice," Ecevit said.

The Turkish foreign ministry also warned Europeans against meddling in the Turkish judiciary process.

"The most important contribution the European Union, the Council of Europe and the other circles can make to this process is to fulfil their own responsibilities in the fight against terrorism, instead of pretending they can manipulate it," the ministry said Saturday.

Turkey would not tolerate any outside interference with the trial, it added.

Three prosecutors from the Ankara state security court on Sunday flew to the prison island of Imrali, where Ocalan is being held, to begin interrogation.

Prosecutor Talat Salk said the interrogations would be completed by Tuesday.

After a month for the pro-

secution to prepare the indictment and another two weeks for the defence to review it, the trial should open in early April and be wrapped up within weeks for a verdict sometime in May, according to Turkish press reports.

This timetable means that the trial will coincide with parliamentary elections scheduled for April 18.

Turkish police detained 380 people in Istanbul for involvement in protests supporting Ocalan during which five policemen were shot and wounded, Anadolu news agency said on Sunday.

Meanwhile, violent anti-Turkish demonstrations have erupted across western Iran in protest at the capture of Ocalan, Iranian newspapers and Kurdish groups reported Sunday.

Protesters have taken to the streets in several towns in Iran's western Kurdistan provinces since Friday and several people were reported killed in clashes with security forces.

"Demonstrations, chanting slogans in support of the Kurdish movement in Iranian Kurdistan and calling for a solution to the Kurdish problem were attacked by government forces and their demonstration was bloodily repressed," the Iran branch of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) said.

"According to the information we have, several people have been killed and wounded and dozens of others arrested," the KDP said in a statement received in Nicosia.

Iran's conservative Quds newspaper reported sporadic clashes between police and demonstrators in the town of Orumiyyeh, while Jahan-e-Islam newspaper said two youngsters were killed by police attempting to ward off an attack on the Turkish consulate there.

The daily Hamshahri, the paper of the Tehran municipality, said there had also been clashes in the western towns of Sanandaj, Baneh and Saqez.

The police were reported to have intervened to break up Kurdish rallies, and markets in a number of other towns closed in protest.

Kurdish sources said the interior ministry had given them permission to hold a rally outside the U.N. building in Tehran on Sunday to demand Ocalan's release.

An influential Iranian Kurd MP called on the country's Kurdish population to rise up in protest against Turkey, which he accused of having "repressed the Kurdish people and flouted their rights for decades."

"Kurdish leaders must know that Ocalan's capture will not hinder the legitimate struggle of Kurds in Turkey," Bakasiddin Aday told parliament on Sunday.

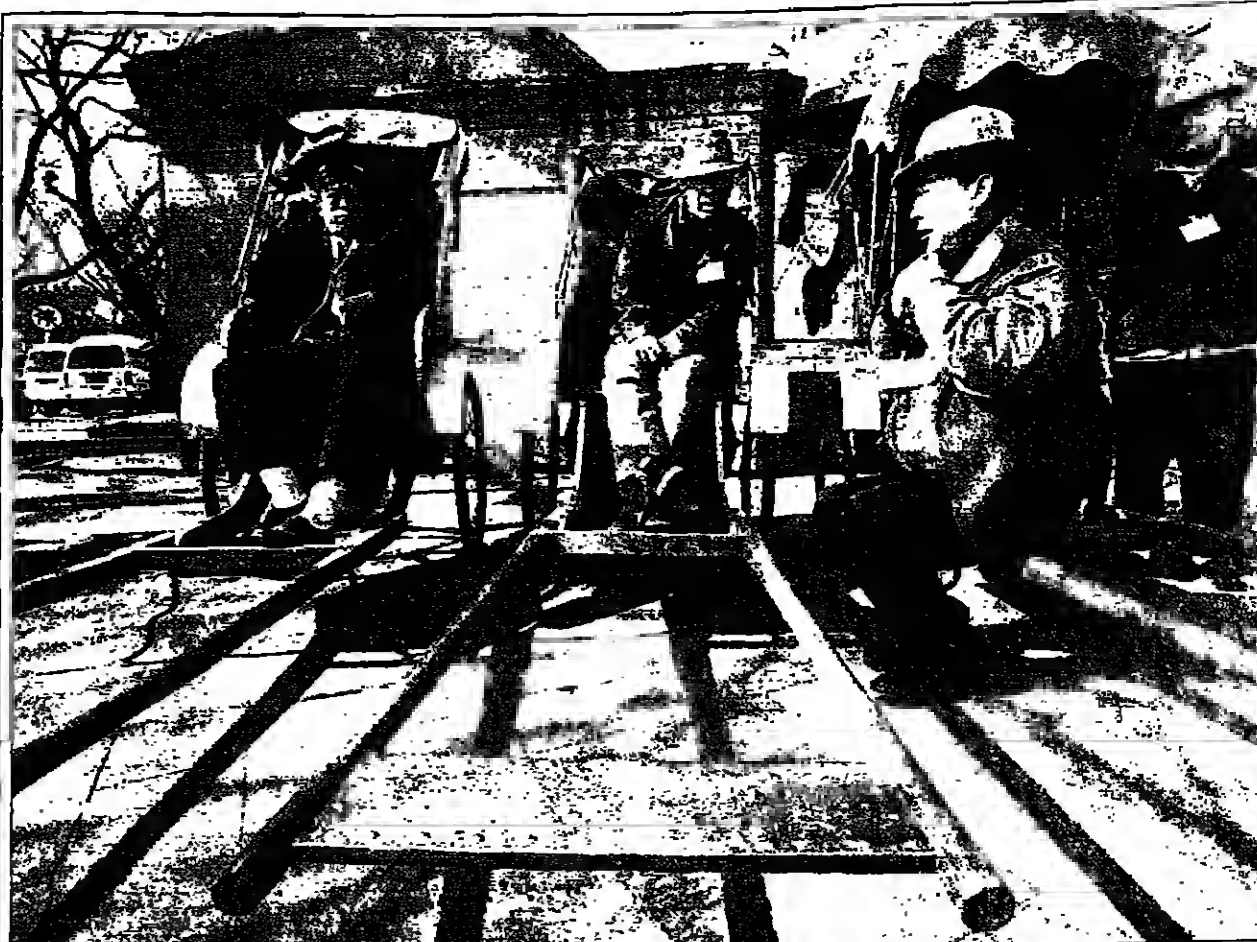
In Israel, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his cabinet praised Israeli security guards who shot and killed three Kurdish protesters who stormed Israel's consulate in Berlin last week.

"The prime minister and other cabinet ministers expressed their appreciation and praise for the manner in which consulate security guards responded to the incident," said a statement released after the weekly cabinet meeting.

"It said the ministers were briefed on Wednesday's shooting by Ami Ayalon, head of the Shin Bet secret service which is responsible for guarding the country's diplomatic missions, and by Foreign Ministry Director General Eitan Ben-Tsur.

Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon issued a statement Sunday warning Kurds that Israel would take "all necessary measures to defend its diplomatic missions and citizens in coordination with local authorities."

He also stressed that Israel has "deep and friendly relations with the Kurdish people" and reaffirmed that Israel was not involved in Ocalan's capture.



NEED A LIFT? Rickshaw pullers wait Sunday for customers on a Beijing streetcorner. Rickshaws have not been seen in the Chinese capital for many years, but a company which runs tours of Beijing's back alleys recently received permission to use a small number of them as a tourist novelty (AP photo)

## Ban sought against Arab Israeli party

**TEL AVIV (AFP)** — An Israeli minister demanded Sunday that an Arab Israeli party, the National Democratic Alliance, be banned from running in May elections because it rejects the definition of Israel as a Jewish state.

"A party which rejects the existence of the state of Israel as a Jewish state is breaking the law and cannot put forward candidates for election," said Michael Eitan, a minister without portfolio in Prime Minister Netanyahu's right-wing government.

Eitan also attacked the alliance's leader, outgoing member of parliament Azmi Bishara, for statements supporting the Lebanese Islamist militia Hizbollah, which is waging a war against Israel's occupation of South Lebanon. The minister said on Israel Radio that he would demand that the state central elections commission bar the alliance,

known by its Arabic acronym, Balad, from running candidates in the May 17 parliamentary elections.

Balad held a convention Saturday in the Arab Israeli city of Nazareth to define its campaign platform and pick its slate of candidates for the polls.

In the previous parliamentary election in 1996, Balad ran a joint list of candidates with the Jewish-Arab Hadash, or Communist Party, which elected five deputies to the 120-member Knesset.

At Saturday's convention and in radio interviews Sunday, Bishara said his party would strive to "eradicate the Jewish-Zionist nature of the state and its racist laws."

"It's time for Israel to become a normal country for all its citizens and not be defined as a homeland for all the world's Jews," Bishara said on Sunday, calling in particular for the abrogation of

the law of return which gives all Jews automatic Israeli citizenship.

"We must change the image and take into account that more than a million Arabs live in this country," said Bishara, a philosophy professor at Bir Zeit University on the West Bank.

Arab Israelis, Palestinians who refused to flee their homes located within the borders of Israel when the Jewish state was created in 1948, now make up 18 per cent of the country's total population of six million.

Orly Adass, a spokeswoman for the elections commission, said Israeli law permits the outlawing of political groups on three grounds — "negating the existence of the state of Israel as a state of the Jewish nation, negating the democratic nature of the state and inciting racism."

One Arab party, the Land

Movement, was barred from running for elections in the 1960s before the current election laws were in place, Adass said. She was unable to say why the party was outlawed.

Bishara also outraged Eitan by speaking favourably Saturday about Hizbollah, whose fighters have killed scores of Israeli troops in the Israeli-occupied buffer zone of South Lebanon over the past decade.

He described Hizbollah as "a brave nationalist force which has taught Israel some lessons."

"Hizbollah, an Islamist movement, has through its firmness and sacrifices become a symbol in the modern Arab World for its battle against the Israeli occupation of South Lebanon," he said.

Eitan called Bishara's remarks "an intolerable apology for Hizbollah, which is a terrorist organisation and our number one enemy."

## Sudan president says ready to let south secede

**KHARTOUM (R)** — Sudan's President Omar Hassan Bashir has said he is ready to let the south secede if that would end the country's 15-year-old civil war.

State television on Saturday night quoted Bashir as telling a Qatari television station his government would continue to try to preserve the unity of the mainly Muslim north and the Christian and animist south but that secession was better than war.

"The possibilities of unity stand, so do the possibilities of separation," said Bashir, who leads an Islamist government.

"However, the option of separation with peace is better than that of unity with the continuation of the war."

The civil war in Sudan has been raging since 1983 between Khartoum and the main rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army, which has been fighting for autonomy in the south.

Initial reactions to Bashir's remarks from southerners were supportive but cautious.

"I hope Bashir will now make good his promise and let the south go because lasting peace will not come unless the south is independent," said one southerner.

Another was sceptical, saying: "Most northern politicians say they are going to give southerners what they want, but none has really given us what we want most — our freedom."

The independent Al Rai Al Aam newspaper said on Sunday the government had opted for dialogue with the opposition.

King to meet with Netanyahu on Sunday

Two U.S. cabinet members held in contempt

Children, teacher stabbed in Latvia

NYC seizes cars of drunken drivers

EU farmers, police clash during demo

Iran reports inspection of chemical sites

Eritrea says Ethiopian planes miss target in attack on airport

Iran blames Iraq for assassination of senior cleric

Man charged with libel for sending complaint to Mubarak

Yemen kidnap suspect provides court with alibi

Israelis wound Lebanese woman

Mubarak to Italy, Germany for talks

Iran reports inspection of chemical sites